

CITY COUNCIL RESEARCH REPORT

Chronic Problem Properties in Saint Paul: Case Study Lessons



Saint Paul City Council
Council Investigation and Research Center
Saint Paul, Minnesota

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City Council Research Report

Chronic Problem Properties in Saint Paul: Case Study Lessons

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Paul: Case Study Lessons**

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INTRODUCTION

Most urban residents are very concerned about their surroundings. Not only do they want their homes and businesses to be safe, clean and attractive — they expect their neighbors' homes and business to be orderly and well-maintained as well. The fact not everyone acts in accord with these values is a major problem for cities. Some share these values but fail to act on them; such as when people want snow cleared off sidewalks but neglect their own. A few do not share these values at all; such as people who see no problem with storing junk cars in their backyard. The dissonance between these widely shared public expectations and the actual behavior of some creates tensions that City government is expected to resolve.

Most cities spend a great deal of time, energy and money trying to maintain an environment that meets community expectations. These efforts are based on the need of elected officials to respond to citizen expectations and on the belief that failure to maintain high standards will lead to disinvestment and out-migration.

Happily, for the most part, the efforts of the City of Saint Paul to maintain community living standards are successful. The City's cadre of code inspectors, police officers, building inspectors, animal control officers, fire officials and attorneys engage in a never-ending struggle to ensure community standards for property maintenance and acceptable behavior are upheld. They conduct inspections, issue corrective orders, conduct abatements, provide advice, cite or arrest wrong-doers and prosecute offenders. These tactics work most of the time. Most property owners comply with directives from City staff and most miscreants straighten-up (at least for a while) when confronted by the police.

Unhappily, there are times when City interventions do not work. Some property owners are unresponsive to directives from City officials, some offenders continue to violate despite interventions by the police. At first blush, this may seem a trivial problem. One might suggest that since most citizens comply, that ought to be good enough. Others might say we just need to "get tough" with those who continue to offend. Unfortunately, neither of these glib answers produce acceptable results.

The suggestion that we simply accept some level of deviance does not fully recognize the effect these offenses have on the surrounding neighborhood. If the effects of violations were limited to the property upon which the offenses occur, then it might be possible to simply tolerate them. This is not, however, the case. The effects of non-compliance are toxic. The appearance of one building affects the appearance of the entire neighborhood. The unsafe practices of some tenants affects the safety of all tenants in the building. Criminal behavior in one house undermines the safety of the entire neighborhood.

Most people are unwilling to accept even one property that is not in compliance with community expectations. This intolerance of deviance, while understandable, creates a serious challenge for City government as it is nearly impossible to achieve 100 percent compliance with any standard. It is relatively easy to achieve 80 percent compliance with any reasonable standard. It is much more difficult, and far more expensive, to achieve 90 percent compliance. It is extraordinarily difficult and extremely expensive to achieve 99 percent compliance. Since there are probably fewer than 300 chronic problems properties among the more than 80,000 properties in Saint Paul, we are, in effect, seeking to move from 99.75 percent compliance to 100 percent compliance. Both theory

and practice suggest that this will be difficult. Nonetheless, because of the profound toxic effect of these properties on the community and the widespread intolerance for the violation of minimum community standards, nothing less than 100 percent compliance is acceptable.

The idea that we should just “get tough” with chronic offenders underestimates the resilience of offenders and overestimates the efficacy of government. While most citizens are socialized to respond to government directives – a few, however, are not. While, in the final analysis, government has the power to coerce compliance with community standards, there are numerous safeguards that circumscribe how and when government power may be used against citizens. These safeguards, such as due process of law, create unintended consequences and give violators an opportunity to evade or avoid government sanctions. The clever, or simply stubborn, can resist compliance and avoid sanctions for a very long time before the full force of possible government sanctions can be brought to bear. Such resistance tends to either exhaust the attention span of enforcement officials or makes effective enforcement so time-consuming and expensive that the government, in effect, gives-up. Even when the City “hangs tough” in the face of resistance, the processes of law can take a very long time.

So! What to do? If we can’t tolerate chronic violations of community standards and “getting tough” is expensive and slow, how do we deal with these vexing problems? We believe the answer is that government must act smarter. By acting smarter we mean learning what *causes* these behaviors and addressing the *causes*, not just the *effects*. Moreover, we must be sure we are looking at all of the symptoms, not just those that a particular agency of government is capable of handling. When usual interventions do not work, we need to turn our focus from *symptoms* to *causes*. So long as dealing with symptoms works, which it usually does, it is not necessary to try to understand and address the underlying causes. This study is intended to begin the process of understanding why some properties have violations of community standards that are serious, repetitive and enduring, while others have violations which are remedied relatively easily. We call such properties “chronic problem properties.” We believe that once we understand causes and *all* of the symptoms in the case, then we can begin to fashion strategies and tactics to address and resolve the underlying problems. We are convinced that this approach holds great promise. Just as understanding the causes of diseases lays the foundation for developing cures, understanding the causes of chronic problem properties will lay the foundation for designing effective government interventions that will work.

To begin to understand chronic problem properties, we must eschew the tendency to see only some symptoms and begin to think deeply about causes. To this end, we have conducted extensive investigations into 32 current chronic problem properties. We have gathered, organized and reviewed City files and County property records for each of these properties. We have conducted in-depth interviews about each property with City staff and community organizers. These efforts have created, we believe for the first time, an extensive cross-agency record of everything we know, or think we know, about each of these properties. We believe that these stories, or case studies, hold the key to understanding chronic problem properties. We invite you to join us in a descriptive visit to each of these properties. From the richness of this experience we believe that you, along with us, will begin to understand the complex tapestry of people, property and public interest that constitutes the chronic problem property world. From this visit, we believe that together we will begin to understand the causes of these problems and therein find the seeds for solutions.

STUDY GOALS

Although chronic problem properties are an ongoing problem for most cities, few researchers have attempted to specifically examine the underlying reasons for their existence or analyzed what interventions are effective in correcting them. In this study, a number of questions have been posed to help us come to a better understanding of chronic problem properties and how to better deal with them. Throughout the study process, we have sought to confirm our wide-spread assumptions, and come to a deeper, richer understanding based on the experience of Saint Paul's neighborhoods with chronic problem properties.

The chapter, *How Chronic Problem Properties Come Into Being*, poses perhaps the largest and most difficult set of questions to answer:

- ☐ How are chronic problem properties created?
- ☐ Who causes them? and
- ☐ What factors make it more likely a chronic problem property will develop?

The basic assumption underlying these questions is that not all chronic problem properties have the same causes and that by identifying the causes of the chronic problem properties, the City would be able to more accurately target interventions to correct the problems. However, the more we learned, the clearer it became that the issue of causation of chronic problem properties, as with most other types of social phenomena, is too complex and multi-layered to identify one specific cause.

The next chapter, *Living with Chronic Problem Properties*, examines the experience of living with chronic problem properties; and it explores:

- ☐ Who is harmed by the existence of chronic problem properties?
- ☐ What kinds of code violations and crimes happen at chronic problem properties? and
- ☐ How is the City, or agencies of other levels of government, alerted about the conditions at these properties?

Dealing with the Problems, is the chapter of the study which discusses the steps government and others can take to decrease the level of problems being experienced at a property. The focus is on how we deal with the symptoms, rather than efforts to explicitly target underlying causes.

- ☐ What enforcement methods are the most useful in resolving each type of chronic problem property situation?
- ☐ Are we effectively using the tools we currently have in addressing chronic problem properties?
- ☐ Are we effectively coordinating the activities of various agencies involved with chronic problem properties?
- ☐ Do inspectors, police, social services and the courts have the tools they need to deal with the complex issues presented by chronic problem properties, or are more or different types of efforts needed?

Curing the Problems moves beyond the steps taken to address individual problems at a property. This chapter goes deeper to examine how we can take into account the cause of the problem to make our attempts at intervention more effective. At the simplest level, we are talking about moving beyond sending a City crew to pick up garbage repeatedly. Here we are trying to get at the

circumstances of why garbage continues to be a problem at a particular property and then using that information to solve the underlying problems. Key in this chapter is the examination of the questions:

- ❑ Who is empowered to solve the underlying problems at a property and how can we get them to do it? and
- ❑ What tools do the individuals and organizations need to solve the problems at a chronic problem property?

Preventing Chronic Problem Properties summarizes the learning that has occurred in the study and applies it to prevention. It asks:

- ❑ How can the key actors be persuaded to take the actions necessary to prevent the creation of chronic problem properties?
- ❑ What risk factors should be targeted to decrease the likelihood of chronic problems from developing? and
- ❑ What additional tools should be made available to help the key actors prevent chronic problem properties from coming into being?

RESEARCH METHODS

The research questions posed in the previous sections are many, and each of them is complex in its own right.

- ❑ How are chronic problem properties created?
- ❑ What do they look and feel like?
- ❑ What can be done to fix them and prevent them from happening?

Clearly, no research method exists to unequivocally answer these questions about chronic problem properties. What we have attempted to do, is to scratch the surface by examining the experiences of 32 such properties in Saint Paul.¹ The stories these case studies tell, together with basic statistics and lessons from theories of criminal justice, neighborhood planning and urban sociology, form the foundation of the research for this study.

Sample Selection

The selection of properties that would serve as case studies of chronic problem properties began with an assessment of the number of these in Saint Paul, as well as the definition of “chronic problem property.” These questions—how many are there ? and what, exactly, are they? – are intertwined. With respect to the first question, “what are they?” Council Research *initially* concluded that

*Chronic problem properties are properties with **serious** (founded and substantial), **repetitive** (at least 3 instances of problems in 18 months) and **enduring** (active as a problem property for at least 18 months) problems which **adversely affect** their neighbors and/or the community as a whole.*

¹ Our original goal was to have 25 complete case studies. However, our elimination process left us with 32, and we felt there were no objective criteria we could apply to our group to narrow the case study list again.

Unfortunately, this definition does not, on its face, take into account the complexity of the issues presented by chronic problem properties by way of the character of the problems, who is responsible for the problems, or who is affected by them. This is something we will explore throughout our study.

As to the second question, “how many are there?” we began with the assumption that not all the problems experienced were reported to a single agency or authority. Some problems are reported to the City’s Code Enforcement Division, such as garbage, broken windows, or “no heat.” Similar problems found at commercial or residential buildings with 3 or more units are reported to the City’s Certificate of Occupancy Program. Animal-related problems are reported to Animal Control. Finally, behavioral and criminal problems are reported to the Police Department. To date, there is no central database of City records to analyze to determine which and how many properties meet the criteria presented in our definition. Additionally, the City may or may not have been contacted about the problems being experienced at a specific property. We, therefore, decided it was most appropriate to ask the people who worked with these properties on a daily basis for nominations.

Nominations

Council Research solicited nominations of chronic problem properties by letter and follow-up phone call to the City’s Code Enforcement Division, Certificate of Occupancy Program, City Council Ward Offices and District Councils. Through this process occurring in the summer of 2000, 275 addresses were received as suggestions for our “list.” It was apparent in our conversations with staff from these agencies and organizations that they did not always nominate all of their potential candidates.² There were also several cases where we did not receive nominations from district councils because of a lack of staffing. Of those nominations we did receive, only some of the same addresses were offered by more than one of the agencies. Altogether, 11 percent of the nominated addresses were identified by two or more agencies or organizations as chronic problem properties. Interestingly, multiple nominations did not occur at a higher rate for those properties with the worst code and criminal violations.

Selection Process

For all of the 275 addresses nominated, we determined their City Council Ward, district council, the basic type of problem(s) experienced and basic information on building use. From this list, we selected 100 addresses. At this time, we were trying to develop a “representative” group by maintaining geographic distribution throughout the City, as well as ensuring a variety of building uses and problems experienced. We then looked at various City computer records to find:

- ☐ Number and type of Code Enforcement calls and actions;
- ☐ Number and type of Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) Program calls and actions;
- ☐ Number and type of Animal Control calls and actions;
- ☐ Number of Police calls for service, reasons for the calls and their outcomes;
- ☐ Commercial or residential use;
- ☐ Rental or owner-occupied; and
- ☐ Number of housing units if multi-family.

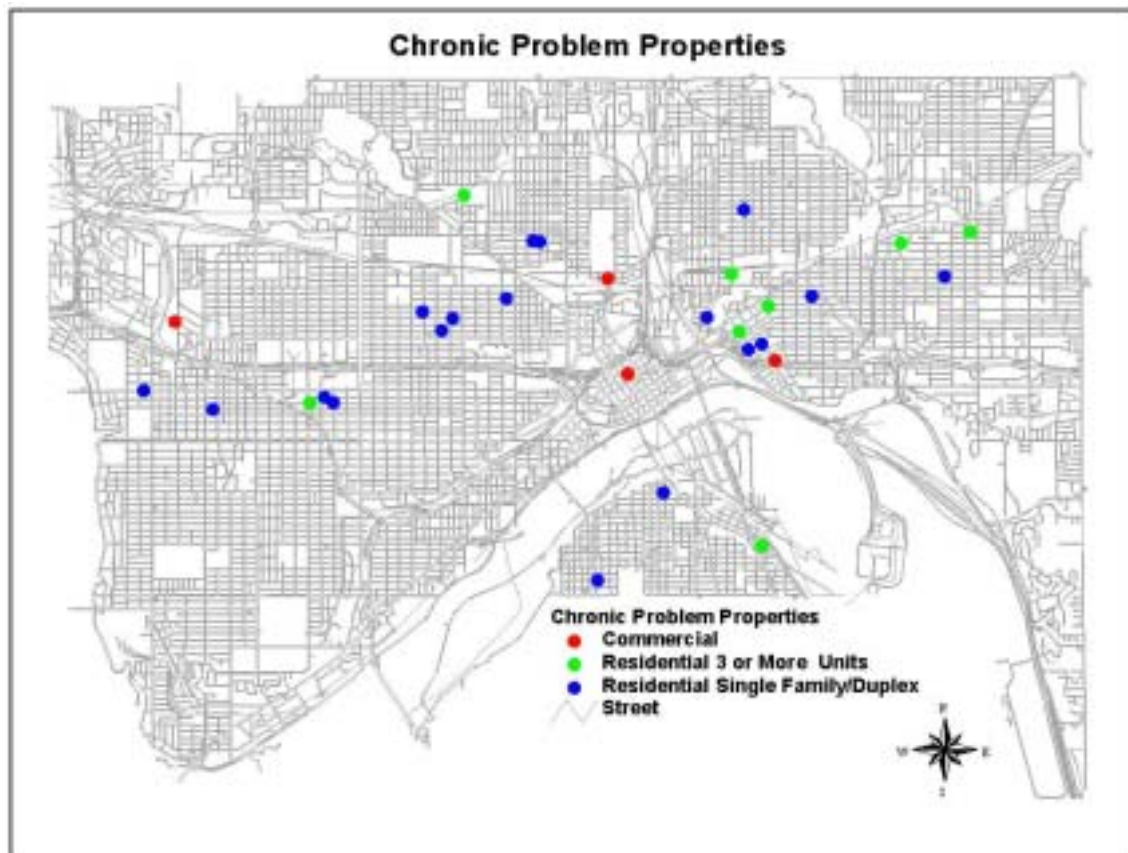
² For example there were many instances where we received follow-up phone calls with additional addresses. In other cases, staff clearly indicated that they were giving us one or two addresses on a particular block, or owned by a particular party, but there were more which could have been suggested.

Using these records we were able to determine if the property *superficially* met our definition as a chronic problem property, based on the whether the problems experienced were repetitive (at least 3 instances of problems) and *enduring* (active over 18 months). Among those eliminated in this step were two types of problem properties worth mentioning:

- 1) those with some animal-related issues, such as too many animals, or the build-up of animal waste inside or in the yard of the property—these properties tended not to be “active” on City files for the requisite 18 months; and
- 2) neighborhood (repair) garages which move old, broken-down cars around, thus evading City parking restrictions, but giving the effect of disorder in these neighborhoods. These properties tended to have just this as a problem and the City licensing process for such facilities gave the City additional leverage to solve the problem sooner.

This comparison process of looking at the properties and our definition helped us eliminate 40 properties, leaving us with 60 properties on our list. For the list of 60 remaining properties, we put together complete files with “every piece of information we could get our hands on” in County, court, and City records. For this list of 60, we then determined if the problems were *serious*, meaning the problems were significant and serious to the City, and to the neighborhood. Using this criteria we eliminated those properties which had:

Diagram A. Map of Chronic Problem Property Case Study Locations



- ❑ A “single major” problem(s) which was slow in resolving (major rehabilitation projects sometimes fall in this category);
- ❑ Repetitive, but relatively minor violations (doesn’t mow the lawn, few and infrequent police service calls for low level offenses); and
- ❑ A tight geographic cluster with other chronic problem properties and may have been experiencing similar problems.

We tried to focus on those properties which had complex or worsening problems, and were therefore the most likely to continue to cause the City and the neighborhood serious headaches over a longer period of time. This elimination process left us with 38 properties. The last 6 properties were eliminated because we were not able to sufficiently document reported problems, interview relevant staff, or otherwise complete case study files for analysis.

The 32 completed case studies are, in our judgement, reflective of the population of chronic problem properties nominated. They are located throughout the City in six of the City’s seven wards, as shown in Table 1. The case studies tend to be more concentrated in the older neighborhoods of the City, as is shown in the map on page six. These case studies are made up of 14 owner-occupied properties, 14 rental properties, and four businesses. This breakdown is shown in greater detail in Table 2.

Table 1. Building Ward Location.

Properties in Group	32
Ward 1	6 (18.8%)
Ward 2	4 (12.5%)
Ward 4	5 (15.6%)
Ward 5	4 (12.5%)
Ward 6	5 (15.6%)
Ward 7	8 (25.0%)

Diagram B. Saint Paul Ward Map



Problems with the Selection Process

There are two basic problems we noticed in our selection process. The first problem was that we assumed the number of calls for service to the Police Department or inspectors would show the severity and complexity of problems at a particular property. They did not necessarily do this. The only measure we observed that could be used as a proxy for severity and/or complexity of problems is “action” police calls.³ However, it was apparent in our review of the data that there was a wide variation in the proportion of founded calls. We believe there are three likely scenarios to account for this: 1) excessive complaints by over-sensitive neighbors; 2) a “normal” rate of calling given the situations the property is experiencing; and 3) under-reporting, where only the

³ We defined “action” police calls as those calls for service to the Police Department which required a police officer to take action. These are recorded in Police Department records as “advised,” “report written” and “detox.” See Table 24 on page 68 for further details.

most serious situations elicit a call for service from an occupant of, or neighbor to, the property experiencing problems. This dynamic is discussed more thoroughly in the chapter, *Living with Chronic Problem Properties* beginning on page 36.

Table 2. Building Occupancy.

	Total	Residential		
		1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial
Properties in Group (N=)	32	19	9	4
Owner Occupied	11 34.4%	11 52.9%	N/A	N/A
Owner Occupied Rental	3 9.4%	3 15.8%	0 0.0%	N/A
Rental	14 43.8%	5 26.3%	9 100%	N/A
Lease (Commercial)	1 3.1%	N/A	N/A	1 25.0%
Owner Operated (Commercial)	3 9.4%	N/A	N/A	3 75.0%

The second problem we observed in our selection process was that some types of chronic problem properties consistently did not “qualify” as such using our definition. As mentioned earlier, cuts were made which had the effect of substantially decreasing the number of properties which were: animal-related; repair garages; and in clusters of chronic problem properties or owned by the same owner.⁴

Population Estimate of Chronic Problem Properties

It is difficult to determine how many chronic problem properties there are in Saint Paul. However, throughout the research process, we have been able to develop an informed opinion about this question. As to number of chronic problem properties, we believe at any given time, there are at least 225-275 in Saint Paul. We deduced this in the following manner:

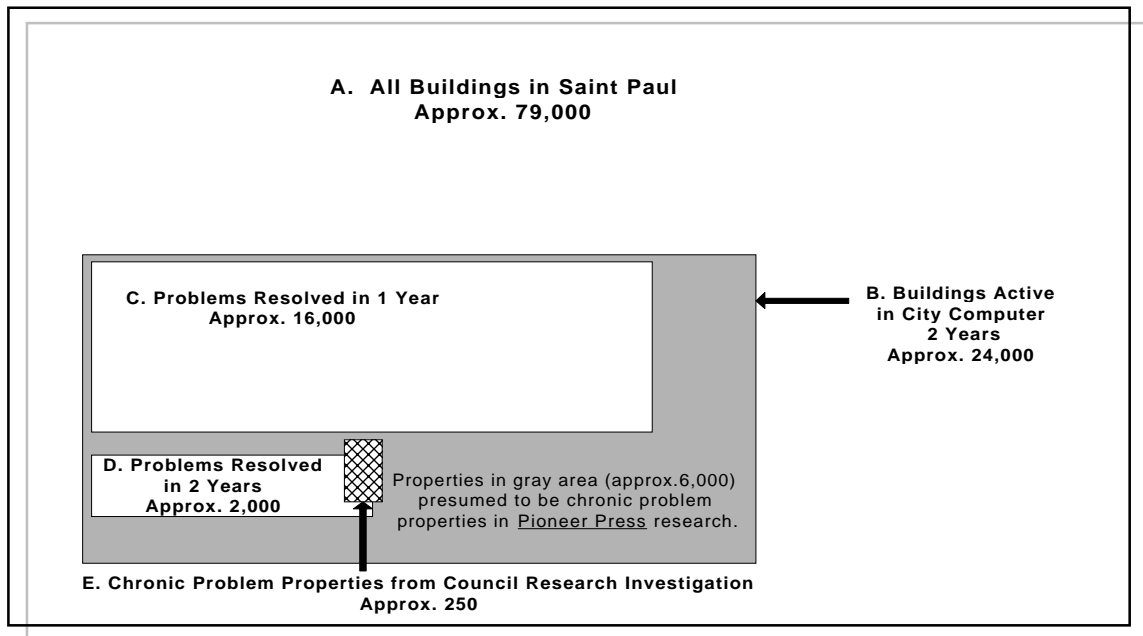
- ❑ 50-60 percent of those we examined (100 of the 275 nominated) met our definition; therefore, 138 - 165 of the nominated addresses likely met our definition;
- ❑ Not all district councils had sufficient staff and were able to respond to our request; therefore, we likely had an “incomplete” list, so we add 20 - 30 ⇒ giving us 158 - 195
- ❑ There are chronic problem properties that were not nominated because they are located in a “cluster” of these types of properties, and are not looked at as individual properties, but parts of a “bad area;”⁵ therefore, we need to add 15 percent to the total of those nominated ⇒ giving us 192-247;

⁴ We chose 1 or 2 representative properties for an area or owner—although we selected cases from these “clusters,” we may still be under-representing the “cluster effect.”

⁵ There were several incidences where City or district council staff indicated, “you could pick any one (property) on that block (or between these streets, or in this complex of buildings), but I’ll just give you this (or these) addresses.”

- ❑ There are chronic problem properties that are not identified as such by City and district council staff because they do not receive complaints on them, usually because of apathy or fatigue on the part of neighbors and occupants; therefore, add another 15 percent → giving us 220-284.

Diagram C. Chronic Problem Properties as Proportion of All Properties in Saint Paul



Area A. This area represents the 79,000 properties in the City of Saint Paul based on Ramsey County tax data.

Area B. This area represents the 24,000 properties the Pioneer Press defined as "active" based on an analysis of 5 ½ years of City Code Enforcement computer records. Being "active," and therefore, according to their analysis a problem property, was determined using 2 dates, the first and the last the City interacted with the property. If those dates were more than 2 years apart, the Pioneer Press determined it was a problem property.

Of these, approximately 16,000 properties had their problems resolved in 1 year (**Area C**), and 18,000 (an additional 2,000) within 2 years (**Area D**). The balance of properties (the gray area within Area B), approximately 6,000, were presumed to be chronic problem properties.

Area E represents the chronic problem properties Council Research estimates exist in Saint Paul at any given time, approximately 250.

Because of the inadequacies of the City's information system, the newspaper's analysis did not include any information as to whether the complaint(s) the City received were founded, whether a code was violated, or the severity of the Code violation alleged. Therefore, it seems very likely that 24,000 is an over-representation of the problem properties in Saint Paul. [Article from the Pioneer Press series on Problem Properties "St. Paul Inspection Data Proves Hard to Track." 5 December 1999.]

Creation of the Cases Studies

The thirty-two case studies were developed using information from a variety of sources for a 24-month study period. First, we examined computerized records and files from the City's Code Enforcement Division, Citizen Services Office, Certificate of Occupancy Program, the Police Department's FORCE⁶ Unit, the City Attorney's Office, Police Department, Fire Department, Animal Control, Department of Planning and Economic Development, and Office of License, Inspections and Environmental Protection. We also gathered information from Ramsey County Department of Property Records and Revenue, IRIS (Integrated Reality Information System), the Polk Directory, and the U.S. Census. Second, we conducted structured interviews with all of the City and district council staff who worked with owners and occupants of the chronic problem properties, as well as the neighbors affected by it. Notably, we have had the opportunity to accompany various inspectors and enforcement agents "in the field" on numerous occasions. During this research process, we are also able to accompany the FORCE unit in the execution of search warrants.

Based on our interviews and field experience, we developed the narrative component of the case studies and conducted follow-up interviews to clarify irregularities in our findings. Unfortunately, not all inconsistencies have been, or can be, rectified. In other cases, we have not been able to verify information we suspect may be true based on other facts we reviewed. Finally, we pointedly asked our interview subjects *why* the property in question became a chronic problem property. These statements were often insightful, but, were subjective reviews of the situations. In essence, we were trying to look at the proverbial elephant, where each interviewee saw only a part of the animal.

Because of these concerns, we have chosen to use code names, in addition to not using property photos, to protect the identity of owners, occupants and neighbors.

It is our contention, the telling of these stories is just as important as relaying facts and figures surrounding their situations as chronic problem properties — and only in putting these putting these together is one able to get a comprehensive view of the situation.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Throughout the research process, we encountered the need to interpret our findings using some sort of a theoretical framework. We, therefore, sought out journals and other academic work that could give insight into the creation of chronic problem properties, as well as suggest possible courses of action for their elimination. We looked at planning, housing, sociology and criminal justice and specifically examined theoretical work in the following areas:

- ☐ Broken Windows Theory;
- ☐ Incivilities Thesis;
- ☐ Neighborhood Cohesion;
- ☐ Social Capital;
- ☐ Collective efficacy;
- ☐ Neighborhood planning; and
- ☐ Deviance Theory.

⁶ FORCE is the acronym for the Focusing Our Resources on Community Empowerment program.

Information and references from our review of these theories appears throughout our work. A resource list of materials may also be found in Appendix B.

ANALYSIS

Our original goal was to analyze information from case studies which speak to:

- ❑ The causes of chronic problem property status— which includes the statistical and anecdotal information;
- ❑ The likelihood of specific problems occurring individually or in combination with each other—which will assist enforcement and social service agencies in assessing the probability of specific problems occurring; and
- ❑ The likelihood for specific enforcement strategies to be successful given the problem or mix of problems at the property—which will assist policy maker, enforcement and social service agencies in assessing the probability of specific problems occurring.

In order to do this, we conducted three types of analyses, in addition to reviewing our data in the context of the theories discussed in the previous section. These areas included a causation analysis, the development of case study narratives and a quantitative analysis of data from our case studies.

Causation Analysis

The first of our analyses, we titled the “causation analysis.” Here, we literally tried to determine the primary, secondary and contributing causes to the case’s chronic problem property status. This was done by researchers reviewing all facts in the files, and then consulting to develop an informed opinion as to cause. As mentioned earlier, we had asked our interviewees to hypothesize why a particular property has become a chronic problem. Examples of the types of reasons we heard include:

- ❑ Landlord exploitation of tenants ;
- ❑ Criminality of tenants;
- ❑ Property owner recalcitrance towards City orders;
- ❑ Financial distress of owner or landlord;
- ❑ Alcohol/chemical dependency of owner or landlord; and
- ❑ Disability of owner or landlord.

Our conclusions tended to be based heavily on the impressions of those we interviewed, and tended to look like this:

- ❑ Primary cause: alcoholic owner occupant, secondary cause: uncontrolled children, contributing cause: financial distress; or
- ❑ Primary cause: exploitive landlord, secondary cause: drug use of tenant, contributing cause: criminal companion of tenant; or
- ❑ Primary cause: incompetent landlord, secondary cause: domestic violence of tenants, contributing cause: financial distress of landlord.

Of course, there were significant problems with this analysis. First, there are the biases of researchers and the interview subjects. Second, the determinations were subjective: there was no definitive way to sort out, among the many problems we found present in our cases, which actually causes the chronic problem property status. Whose to say it was alcoholism or financial distress that tipped the balance? And when can an outsider, in our case—researchers, validly “diagnose” alcoholism or financial distress? A few drinks to some would be alcoholism to others, and we were in no position to judge. Financial distress may have been brought on by frivolous spending, and some may believe there were adequate resources, were it not for foolish spending. Third, it was nearly impossible to separate the cause and effect of these different problems, and the stories surrounding each situation were fluid. Fourth, it became very clear that many of the problems which lead to chronic problem property status exist in many households and businesses—that are not chronic problem properties. This last finding helped lead to the development of section of this report dealing with predisposing factors to chronic problem property status. Because of the problems encountered with this analytical approach, we did not use this analysis in developing specific findings relating to cause.

Case Study Narratives

Throughout the research process, it became apparent to us that some of our greatest learning was coming from the stories associated with each of our case studies. This seemed to hold true whether we were talking about how a neighborhood experienced an incident of child neglect, or how a bar failed to make timely payments to the City to maintain the appropriate licenses. We, therefore, decided to split our analysis of the cases to include both a narrative, story-telling approach, as well as a quantitative approach. In developing this narrative approach, we had to make determinations about which way to tell a particular story when we had conflicting versions, but by and large, the information we gathered from different sources came together in a consistent and coherent fashion. This approach also gave us the opportunity to discuss in more depth the perceptions of those involved, not only about the property, but also the dynamics of the households and neighborhoods. One example of this is the case of racism and cultural bias, where we do not have “quantitative indicators,” but only people’s impressions of what is going on in a particular area. The use of case study narratives throughout this report has helped to clarify and give life to some of the issues addressed. It also gives us a coherent structure for organizing the vast amount of information we gathered.

Quantitative Analysis

The third type of analysis used in the development of this study is a quantitative analysis of the data gathered in the case studies. Although we are unable to draw definitive conclusions because our sample of case studies was not randomly drawn,⁷ we can use the information to form credible hypotheses about what the likely dynamics are. For the 32 case studies, a broad array of information was gathered. The actual data items include items related to the following areas:

- ☐ Property ownership and tenancy;
- ☐ Property valuations;
- ☐ City enforcement and housing loan services;
- ☐ City Code Enforcement and License actions;

⁷ Recall that the concept of chronic problem properties is largely a self-defined and, therefore a subjective phenomenon, so it is impossible to know the “true” population from which a statistically valid sample can be drawn, and that estimates have been used. Although we tried very hard to use cases we believed to be representative of those nominated, there is no definitive way to confirm this.

- ☐ Police Patrol data;
- ☐ Police FORCE Unit activity;
- ☐ Call levels to various City agencies; and
- ☐ Property and crime conditions.

It should be noted that although we were able to document conditions, call levels and enforcement actions, the City information systems available did not allow for analysis of these pieces of information in a “chronological” fashion. We were, therefore, unable to make definite “cause and effect” determinations about given conditions leading to particular call levels and enforcement actions. What we can, and do, discuss is the propensity of each of these pieces of information to be associated with one another. It is our belief that an analysis of the quantitative information and the narrative stories of each of our case studies, taken together, will provide a comprehensive picture of chronic problem properties in Saint Paul and very likely in other urban environments, as well.

Financial Calculations

In the course of conducting the quantitative analysis for this study, it became obvious that almost all of the interactions the City had with our chronic problem properties had costs attached to them. The City, as a government entity, collects taxes to provide to the community-at-large the services discussed in this report. There is little debate that provision of police, building and health inspection, fire suppression and emergency medical services ensures the health, safety and welfare of all of the residents of the City. However, the high level of services required at the chronic problem properties we studied— and the expenses associated with those services— deserve special attention.

Therefore, we set about to establish two dollar figures associated with each of our case studies. The first figure we established the municipal portion of the property taxes owed for 2000 using Ramsey County property tax information systems. The second figure we calculated was the costs associated with the City services provided to each property. In order to establish costs, we multiplied the number of visits City staff made to a property by the average cost by visit. Table 3 provides a summary of our estimates and the basis for those calculations. In the case of some of the services of the FORCE Unit, very conservative estimates were used with respect to staff involvement. It is also expected that these numbers would differ widely by property and situation.

It is important to consider that property taxes make up about one-third of the City’s general fund budget. The balance of the City budget is financed with money the City receives from the State of Minnesota and several other sources. Throughout the study we present information on the City property taxes owed by each of our case studies, and compare this to the expense of the services provided. When looking at these figures, it is important to keep in mind the City’s other revenue sources finance two-thirds of the costs for the services we describe. In essence, for every \$300 worth of police services provided, \$100 is covered by property taxes and \$200 from other sources.

In addition to these quantifiable costs, there are also a number of “indirect” or other costs. For example, when a Code Enforcement citation is written, there is not only additional time invested on the part of the inspector (not captured as a part of the visit), but also on the part of the City Attorney’s Office which is prosecuting the citation. The same may also be said of Police for arrests, citations, and search warrants. Another type of staff cost involves City employees who work on these chronic problem properties, but whose time is not logged in our dispatch or complaint management information systems. These people include staff in the Council and Mayor’s Offices who handle constituent concerns about these properties. Time spent in meetings

and at the desk trying to work on these problems is not captured by these information systems. Neither is the time spent proactively monitoring chronic problem properties, as is the case with staff for the City's registered vacant building program. Finally, we did not attempt to quantify costs associated with the negative effect these properties have on their neighborhoods, such as potentially decreased property values.

Table 3. Cost Calculations

Dept./Division	Cost Estimate	Basis for Calculations
Code Enforcement, Zoning, Licensing, Animal Control and Certificate of Occupancy Complaints	\$150 per Complaint	Average of 1 initial visit and 1 follow-up. \$75/visit calculation made by City Council fiscal staff for Code Enforcement Excess Consumption ordinance amendments. 2 visits at \$75/visit is \$150. This is the base number used for several types of City complaints in this study, as they require similar staffing levels.
Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Fire Services	\$457 per Run	Using 2000 budget figures and all Fire and EMS runs made by the department, the unreimbursed cost to the City is \$457 / run on average.
Police Call for Service	\$130 per Call	City Council fiscal staff analysis of cost from 2000 for the Excess Consumption of Police Services Ordinance.
FORCE Unit Knock & Talk	\$130 per Visit	Estimate same staff involvement as responding to call.
FORCE Unit Buy/Surveillance	\$325 per Buy / Surveillance	Estimate 2.5 X staff involvement as responding to call (2.5 x \$130). (<i>Very likely a substantial underestimate.</i>)
FORCE Unit Arrest	\$520 per Arrest	Estimate 5 X staff involvement as responding to call (5 x \$130).
FORCE Unit Warrant Execution	\$1,300 per Warrant	Estimate 10 X staff involvement as responding to call (10 x \$130). (<i>Very likely a substantial underestimate.</i>)

HOW CHRONIC PROBLEM PROPERTIES COME INTO BEING

Chronic problem properties are characterized by ongoing and enduring social and physical problems, otherwise referred to as incivilities, disorder, or nuisance crime and conditions. Why these problems persist while others cease upon intervention is puzzling. In order to better understand this phenomenon we looked at who was involved in perpetuating or fixing the chronic problems at our properties. For the purpose of this study, we refer to them as actors.

WHO FAILS?

The four actors we identified with chronic problem properties. The first is the owner who has the legal right to the property in question. Owners can be individuals who live at the property, otherwise referred to as owner occupants. However, 56 percent of our case studies have non-resident owners, landlords or property managers who act on their behalf. We observed that owners are ultimately responsible for the physical upkeep of the property and are, therefore, the main point of contact and inquiry when a property is in disrepair. Owners play an important role in fixing and preventing chronic problems by ensuring that properties are up to code and criminal activity does not occur.

The occupant is the actor who dwells or resides within the property in question. They could be owner-occupants or tenants. Occupants are important in this discussion because they alone are likely to alert government agencies to interior property code violations in rental properties. Occupants were also the primary source for crime and behavior problems found at the property. Not surprisingly, it is more difficult to ameliorate social problems or incivilities, such as drug dealing, when it is condoned or perpetuated by the owner, as tenants can be evicted.

The neighborhood is the third actor group we are considering and we consider it the distinct area, residents or organizations surrounding the property in question. It is made up of individuals in the vicinity of the property and the organizations that work within, or represent, that particular area. It may not appear neighborhoods have a direct impact on chronic problem properties, but they do in a number of ways. We see this in the role neighbors and neighborhood organizations play in providing both a sense of community and in perpetuating community standards of behavior—social cohesion and community efficacy. (Social cohesion and community efficacy are discussed in *Living with Chronic Problem Properties* on page 47.) How well these neighborhood systems are functioning will determine whether the neighborhood can prevent the creation of chronic problem properties and mitigate their problems. If these systems are not functioning, neighborhoods can actually work to perpetuate or facilitate the creation of chronic problem properties. For example, if junk cars in a neighborhood are commonplace or loud music is the norm, the neighborhood incorporates the problems of the property into the fabric of the community. Government depends on the neighbors or neighborhood organizations to call the police or notify Code Enforcement of social and/or physical incivilities in their neighborhood.

Government is the final actor which plays a major role when thinking about chronic problem properties. For the purpose of this study, the term government primarily refers to the City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County and the court system. Government is the entity that regulates, enforces codes and laws and provides services relating to residents' public health and safety. It sets the

minimum standard for property maintenance and behavior through the legislative process. These standards are enforced by inspectors and the police. In Saint Paul, the Code Enforcement Division is responsible for enforcing property maintenance standards at all one- and two-family units. This division also enforces exterior code standards for all Saint Paul properties. Buildings with three or more units are inspected at least every two years through the City's Certificates of Occupancy Program in the Fire Department. Government also establishes programs to assist residents, including problem property owners. It also uses many tools to clean, abate, try to eliminate and prevent problem properties. These steps often ameliorate any code-related problems that arise. Although, if an owner or occupant is unwilling to maintain these corrections, it often becomes a chronic problem property. Another City service that is highly used to correct chronic problem properties is the Saint Paul Police Department. Phenomenally, one hundred percent of our case properties had police visits during the study period resulting from calls for service. Although the City of Saint Paul is not directly responsible for social service activities within the City, we do know that social services are an important complement to police initiatives.

WHY DO THEY FAIL?

Chronic problem properties are multi-causal and complex. Each chronic problem property is idiosyncratic in nature and has individual and environmental forces that perpetuate its problems. Through analyzing our case studies, we found there is not one cause or formula we can apply to determine what creates problem properties, or even more so, why they perpetuate.

After studying the cases and the actors, we noticed a pattern of deviance from mainstream society. Typically, problem properties are abated effectively upon intervention. However, some problem properties persist undeterred by fines, correction orders, police interventions or drug raids. In order to better understand this phenomenon, we chose to look at several sociological frameworks to clarify how deviance manifests itself and how it works in the creation of chronic problem properties.

Deviance

Deviance is defined as behavior that differs from accepted social or moral standards. The following three sociological paradigms explain patterns of behavior that may be considered deviant by mainstream society, which are in conflict with established norms and laws. These patterns of behavior have been a prevalent throughout our case studies. We will look to identify why these patterns exist and even more importantly, why they persist.

Symbolic Interaction

Symbolic Interaction is a theory that attempts to explain the development of one's identity through one's interaction with others and how one acts in response to others. According to the theory, one develops a sense of self based on the idea that "I am what I think you think I am." If an individual interprets that "others" perceive him or her as deviant, he or she may continue to participate in this self-fulfilling prophecy. Symbolic Interaction theory suggests the important piece is how the actor interprets his/her role based on how he/she perceives and models other people's beliefs about this role. How do the "others" in this case influence and perpetuate the deviance at chronic problem properties? How do they encourage the persistence of social and physical incivilities?

The idea of "other" encompasses the influences an individual uses to identify themselves in relation

to the world around them. “Other” can be defined in two ways; first is known as the “Significant Other”. This includes people who are close to you, such as family, friends or colleagues. The individual holds in high esteem what they think the “significant other” thinks about them. Therefore, the individual tries to act in a way that is consistent with how he or she perceives how the significant other thinks about his or her role.⁸ Whereas, the second other is referred to as the “Generalized Other,” and it includes the rest of society. For example, individuals interpret how society views them to be or act through stereotypes in the media. Or, if they grew up in a neighborhood where their family was treated in a certain way by the neighbors, they may continue that pattern. Individuals may try to “be” what they think others expect them to be or they may refuse to conform to values or perceived values of the society. Symbolic Interaction helps to explain some of the dynamics in *Watering Hole* and *Fight Club*, where customer perception and expectation become reality for the owners.

Expanding on this basic theory, some symbolic interactionists would explain that an individual has difficulty maintaining their property because of their affiliation with a particular group, whether it is ethnically or economically based. This aspect of the theory incorporates the concept of the “pluralized” other. The theory of the “pluralized” other states that one’s affiliation or identification with a particular group of people -- whether it be a racial, ethnic or economic group -- may greatly influence a person’s perception of how society views them. For these theorists, the “pluralized” other is just as important as the “significant” other in shaping the individual’s view of the world.

A low-income person, for instance, may perceive the rest of society believes that low-income neighborhoods are not tidy. This may be confirmed by everyday experience as the residents drives through his or her neighborhood and sees that, indeed, the neighborhood is disorderly. In that residents mind being a low-income becomes associated with not maintaining a high level of maintenance on one’s home. Moreover, the low income resident may also perceive that others in the low income group may think that maintaining a home at high standards is a sign of uppity or show-off behavior that is inconsistent with the norms of the group. If the resident strongly desires to continue his or her identification with this group, he or she will conform to this interpretation of the groups norms and values. For these reasons, he or she may be less likely to address issues on their property which others in society may think are important. The important point here is that it is not that person’s character which explains their inability to maintain their property. Rather it is their identification with a particular group or class of people that reinforces their perceptions of the world and shapes their decisions regarding property maintenance.

Structural Functionalism

The theory of Structural Functionalism holds that a society functions best when individuals share the same norms and values because it promotes solidarity. The theory also maintains, however, that because a society has established norms and values, that society will also have deviance because the rules of the society will not be agreed to or shared by everyone. In other words, while it is beneficial for society to reduce deviance, a society will never be able to truly and completely eliminate it.

⁸ Although family is not outright mentioned or referred to in this study, it could be hypothesized that family might play a role in halting or preventing chronic problem properties. One way is through socialization. If a family raises a child in an environment that adheres to social norms and standards regarding conditions of property, the child will emulate this behavior with their home. However, if the family does not follow these norms, then the children are more likely not to participate accordingly. The second way family might be considered influential is through peer pressure or observance. If a family member notices the decline of a property, most likely they will intervene, either monetarily to ease the cost of maintenance, or to address other incivilities.

Case Study: The Brothers Grim

- Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1924.
- MV: \$119,000
- City Taxes: \$471
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$5,891
- Problems: Drug-Addicted Brothers, Garbage, Sewer Line Break in Basement.

“The Brothers Grim” is a cute house in an attractive area of the City. The home has no mortgage and was the recipient of a forgivable rehabilitation loan for \$7,092 in 1991. Until 1997 this was the home of a older woman, who was thought to be an eccentric character by her neighbors, and her two adult sons. The mother died in 1997 and the has spiraled down ever since. The ownership was somewhat uncertain during the study period as the mother’s estate was in probate; however, the sons continued to occupy the home. They did not, however, bother to pay the property taxes which had been delinquent since 1998 for \$9,517. In the summer of 2001, the property was taken by the County as a tax forfeiture. While we are focusing on the years of 1999 and 2000, problems involving dog fighting and drugs extend back further. In recent years, the property seems to experience waves of problem activities for three to six months at a time, with brief one to three month lulls in between.

This house has experienced both interior and exterior code violations. The most specular interior violation involved a broken sewer line in the basement. The brothers attempted to continue to live in the home despite this situation until complaints from neighbors about rats and odor brought City inspectors to the scene. As a result, in July of 1999, the City condemned the building for one month for being unfit for human habitation. Interestingly, the “Brothers” approached the District Council for financial help with the sewer problem, but were unsuccessful with that effort. They did, nonetheless, get the sewer repaired and resumed occupancy. Other, less serious, code violations resulted in summary abatements and citations for tall weeds and grass, garbage and broken stairs. A warrant is still outstanding for failure to appear in court in response to a tag issued for the broken sewer line.

The “Brothers” are widely considered to be heavy drug

users involved in a variety of criminal behavior. The police responded to this address 46 times during the study period. Besides drug issues, they responded to calls involving fighting, domestic assault, disorderly boys, auto theft and burglary. These calls and subsequent investigation led to at least one FORCE raid on the property. Convictions for drug possession and operating a disorderly house resulted from this. The domestic assault charges were leveled following a violent fight between one brother and the other brother’s girlfriend, where she was attacked with a chair and a knife. Neighbors reported a variety of instances where domestic situations have spilled out of the house and onto the street. People, including minors, come and go at all hours. There have also been arrests for selling narcotics and child endangerment. The child endangerment resulted from a resident girlfriend leaving her child unattended. Criminal activity went largely unabated through the summer of 2001, as is reflected in 38 percent increase in calls for police service over the previous year.

Despite the fact neighbors organized to deal with this problem through the FORCE unit and other police units, it has been to little avail as the problems continue to re-emerge. The brothers calm down their activities for a time, perhaps because they are in jail, or because they are genuinely trying to clean up their act. However, they seem to be so immersed in the drug culture that their criminal behavior begins again, and the property continues to deteriorate. Many of the staff involved with this property believe the brothers are probably too far gone for any effective intervention and may actually have become unable to maintain this property. They are, however, a neighbor’s nightmare. The violent and drug-related crime, together with the lack of maintenance, led to the physical decline of this otherwise nice home in a nice neighborhood. Clearly, the government either lacks the tools to deal with such a difficult problem or is simply unwilling to do what it would take to resolve this problem.

In the end, the government taken control of this property for non-payment of taxes. Given that the house was owned outright, it seems particularly surprising that the brothers lacked the where-with-all to refinance the property to pay the back taxes. According to the last reports we received, one brother periodically tries to get back into his lifelong home for someplace to stay, although it was boarded and secure. The other brother’s

Structural functionalists attribute deviance to a lack of assimilation by some into the rest of society, thus producing a sub-culture that is different, or in conflict with, “mainstream society.” In turn, this subculture creates an environment that supports and reinforces certain norms and values that may be considered deviant. The dominant culture, or mainstream society, does not have rewards or sanctions that overcome the rewards and satisfaction of remaining in the comfort and stability of the sub-culture they grew up in. Thus, these individuals do not participate in the same opportunity structures as those who follow established mainstream norms. By not participating, they may be excluded from having the same educational opportunities, subsequently leading to disadvantages and possible discrimination in the workplace or in competing for traditional jobs. Therefore, structural functionalists believe that it most desirable to get those in this particular sub-culture to assimilate into mainstream society.

In the context of chronic problem properties, a particular subculture may socialize an individual to adhere to norms and values that may be considered deviant to the dominant culture. For instance, storing cars on your property. Some may think this is acceptable to do in order to use the parts in other automobiles, thus saving them money. However, it may be against the law according to the dominant culture. In this example, the dominant society may not have the resources to overcome the benefit from storing your own car parts in your yard, so some would naturally continue to do it. In *Misplaced*, the owner and proprietor was aptly described in an interview as being “misplaced in time and location,” alluding to his lack of connection with prevailing community standards on how the auto towing and repair business should, and should not, be run.

Conflict Theory

This theory is based in Marxist thought and finds the source of deviance in social and economic inequalities. Conflict theorists believe deviance is created by unequal access to wealth. These theorists view that society is continual conflict to access wealth. It is the source of stratification in society. Deviance comes from those who do not have wealth and try to access it through alternate means, which are often in conflict with the wealthy. Those in power, often the wealthy, create the rules to protect their interests. Therefore, those who differ or do not agree with these rules are considered deviant. Defining those in the lower classes as deviant is a way to exercise power over them and maintain control.

This theory also identifies how this view manifests class distinctions. Those who are defined by classes identify with that particular class and those within that class and view themselves as separate from other classes. This develops and strengthens class identity and class affiliation which is, more often than not, stronger than affiliating with other classes. So it is in the best interest of the upper class to maintain their power distinctions over the lower classes by limiting the opportunity structures of the lower class. Thus, lower classes may have limited access to education and lack access to capital. They may be arrested more because they are not of the power class or participate in their way of doing things, which helps the wealthy class maintain its class boundaries. Under this theory, drug dealing may be seen as an alternative means of earning a living when other opportunities do not present themselves— and even sometimes if they do. Prostitution may be interpreted in this school of thought similarly. These situations present themselves in the case studies *Career Criminals*, *Cracking Up*, *Motel California*, and *Dog House*, among others.

Unable and Unwilling

Deviance manifests itself as individual actors that are unable or unwilling to effectively address and eradicate problems at their properties, thus becoming chronic problem properties. Similarly, neighborhood organizations and government may also be considered unable and/or unwilling to

Case Study: Motel California

- Commercial Motel.
- MV: \$303,400; MV per Room: \$2,408.
- City Taxes: \$3,028
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$34,534
- Problems: Uncaring and Possibly Corrupt Management, Code Violations, Crime.

“Motel California” is a 100+ unit motel that rents rooms on a daily and weekly basis for approximately \$65 and \$215 respectively. The people who rent here tend to fall into several categories: individuals and families near homelessness; migrant and seasonal workers; along with some drug dealers and prostitutes.* The motel has a “seedy” reputation and it has been suggested it attracts bad tenants because no one else would want to stay there. The surrounding neighborhood is largely light industrial, offices and some retail. This property has been considered a problem by neighbors and the City for a long time, and it has been on the problem properties task force list for years. The motel continues to maintain a high occupancy rate probably due to the current shortage of affordable housing in Saint Paul and surrounding areas.

Maintenance of the motel has long been a serious problem. The property has received many correction orders for overcrowding, sanitation, rodents, lighting, smoke detectors, extension cords, exposed wiring, fencing, stairways, roof, exterior walls and abandoned vehicles. It has, however, maintained its Certificate of Occupancy by making corrections when required by the City. The owners are considering reopening a restaurant in the building and are engaging in a unit-by-unit rehabilitation effort which has extended over a long period.

Crime has been a continuing source of concern with this property. The police were called to this address 296 times during the study period—which is an average of three police calls per week. The reported crimes have included: public drinking; narcotics; prostitution; child abuse; disorderly boys; domestic assaults; disturbances; fights; thefts; assaults; aggravated assault; vandalism; sex offenses; auto theft; obstruction of legal process; burglary; robbery; runaways and stalking. Sexual assaults are reported by neighborhood activists to be frequent, which may be related to prostitution and transient residents. *(In 2001 calls were up slightly over the previous two years and there continues to be much reported violence and nuisance crime here.)* It has been suggested this high level of criminal activity is not unusual for

a building of this type, which may partially explain the very high number of 31 Fire and 30 EMS runs to this address, as well as the high number of “transports to detox” (11) which resulted from a variety of calls. These Fire and EMS calls may be duplicate calls, as both types of units are routinely dispatched in response to emergency medical service calls. Even if this is the case for all of the calls, fire units were still called to this property at least once each month.

Neighborhood organizations, neighboring businesses and police have articulated a number of chronic problems at this motel, almost all of which relate to the behavior and criminal activity of its occupants. One might suspect that these concerns were born out of a “not-in-my-backyard” mentality, given the types of residents who stay at this motel. However, the long record of code and criminal problems documents the real and serious nature of the ongoing problems. The extremely high level of “visible” nuisance, violent and property crime, coupled with the “invisible” problems lurking within the motel’s rooms, spurred concerned neighbors to meet with motel management. Although motel management has come to a few meetings to discuss these concerns, many believe their follow-through has been inadequate. For example, given the high level of crime, the need for private security was pointed out. Management did follow through and provide one security guard for an 8-hour night shift. However, reported crimes remained largely unchanged, even increased, in the year following our study period. In another case, a notorious “swinger’s club,” which is banned in at least one Minnesota county, met for a weekend night at the motel—even though the neighbors had some previous bad experiences with this group meeting at this location. It was thought to be inconsiderate, at best, of management to book them for another event. After being confronted about the group’s background, management did, however, respond by canceling the group’s future bookings.

Many see the manager as the root of the problem with this property, and it was noted that the advent of serious problems with this motel seems to coincide with his tenure as manager. He is said to not often be present and not care about managing the building, as he seems to have other business interests that occupy most of his time. Some even believe he is actually facilitating criminal activity at the motel by renting units to out-of-town gang members and visiting drug dealers. Some staff we interviewed also suspect that he helps drug dealers—knowingly or inadvertently—to conceal their criminal activities by moving them around in the building which thwarts police surveillance activities. He is thought to generally cooperate with criminals, drug dealers and prostitutes. The owners seem little interested in the manager’s activities so long as the business remains highly profitable. Given its current rates and occupancy, it is undoubtedly, very profitable.

* “No national—or even reliable local—statistics are available, but apparently more and more of the poor have been reduced to living in motels. Census takers distinguish between standard motels, such as those tourists stay in, and residential motels, which rent on a weekly basis, usually to long-term tenants. But many motels contain mixed populations or change from one type to the other depending on season. Long-term motel residents are almost certainly undercounted, since motel owners often deny access to census takers and the residents themselves may be reluctant to admit they live in motels, crowded in with as many as four people

effectively address chronic problem properties, not because they themselves are deviant *per se*, but because of their inability or unwillingness to respond to these chronic problems. For purposes of this study, being “unable” is to lack the necessary power, authority or means to halt problem properties. As we see in our case studies, there are numerous individuals identified as unable due to mental illness, poverty, drug addiction, etc.

An actor who is “unable” to maintain their property shows up in number of ways. Many of our case studies provide examples of owners or tenants who do not have the capacity to fix the physical or social incivilities at their properties. An individual’s mental and emotional capacity may be hindered by mental illness, addiction to drugs or any number of things. In addition, owners or occupants may not have the economic capacity to maintain their property. They may not be able to pay utility bills which will prompt a condemnation from the City if services are shut-off from the property. Tenants may be “unable” to effectively address incivilities because of limited resources and options. Saint Paul’s tight housing market may inhibit a tenant’s ability to find or afford another place to live. Thus, landlords and owners may continue to exploit them and refuse to keep up the property knowing they will always have tenants, whether or not they keep up the property. A tight housing market is a landlord’s market— unfortunately, even for the slum lords.

Lack of knowledge about laws or existing resources is also a piece in the puzzle of chronic problem properties. Owners and tenants may not know what is considered a code violation. For example, owners may not think there is a problem with storing mattresses in their backyard. Therefore, they may choose not to comply with correction notices because they feel that the government and/or their neighbors are simply overreacting. On the other hand, if a chronic problem property emerges because of a lack of resources, owners and tenants may be unable to mitigate the problems because they may not know about government or community programs that would help them solve the problems they are facing.

Government may also be unable to mitigate behavioral and physical incivilities. By the time a problem property becomes a chronic problem property, the government is almost always aware of it. However, the problems at the property may be too complex for a standard government intervention to fix. The “underlying” problems at a property, such as economic distress or domestic violence, may need to be resolved before the “surface” problems of uncollected garbage, broken windows and uncontrolled children can be successfully engaged.

For purposes of this study, being “unwilling” is to be reluctant to fix problem properties. As we have seen in our case studies, there are numerous individuals identified as unwilling due to greed, hopelessness, indifference, antagonism towards government, their neighbors or tenants. Our case studies suggest landlords or owners will often remain unwilling to cease the physical or social incivilities because of the financial benefits of those actions. For example, several of our case studies outlined how owners exploit the precarious financial situation of tenants. For example, in *Double Trouble*, the landlord keeps the units substandard and demands first and last month’s rent from desperate families. Then when families are forced to move because of the horrible living conditions, the owner keeps all of the deposits and then seeks the same from the next tenant. Owners or tenants may also profit from illegal activity occurring at the property. For owners, the benefit may be direct, in that they are involved in illegal activity. More often than not, however, the benefit is indirect. The landlords rents to people involved in illegal activities because they are more likely to accept poor living conditions without complaint— *quid pro quo*. Government may also be perceived as unwilling to deal with chronic problem properties. The main reason for this is that government lacks the financial resources and capacity to effectively deal with the complexity of most chronic problem properties. Because of these limited resources, government often focuses on what it can fix at a reasonable cost, thus prioritizing other enforcement and service provisions.

Case Study: Cash Cow

- 69 Unit Rental Built in 1971.
- MV: \$1,260,000; MV per Unit: \$18,261.
- City Taxes: \$4,573
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$34,821
- Problems: Incompetent Managers, Criminal Activity, Code Violations.

“Cash Cow” is an apartment building with nearly 70 units in a complex consisting of this and a similar adjoining building. There are also several large apartment buildings immediately adjacent to this complex. These are all relatively new buildings, which are somewhat secluded by woods in an area of the City which has almost a “suburban feel” to it, with many single family homes and large yards. Given its size and layout, the building is really a neighborhood within the neighborhood in which it is located. Not surprisingly, there are a variety of people who live here, and indications are that the majority of them are law-abiding and decent people to have as neighbors. The problem is that this complex is in decline in much the same way we think about some older neighborhoods in major cities. The physical conditions are getting worse. It is getting more crowded, and poorer people—many of whom rely on Section 8 to pay their rent—are moving in. Finally, a few “bad actors” are scaring away those decent tenants with the means to leave and find another place to live.

Beginning with the physical decline of the building, we see a pattern of neglect with respect to basic maintenance and needed periodic rehabilitation projects. The City has issued many correction orders some including as many as 218 items. Two citations were issued for improper building maintenance. Both citations were unsuccessfully challenged by the owners in District Court. The Certificate of Occupancy was also revoked, but was eventually reissued because the City did not want to displace the occupants of this large building. Major deficiencies have involved heat, electricity, overcrowding, holes in walls, infestations, paint and torn carpeting. The exterior has also experienced maintenance problems involving paint, roof, doors, windows and screens. The City’s Problem Properties Task Force has addressed the property on several occasions and there was also a Tenant’s Remedy Action, which turned out to be mostly unsuccessful, as only a few of the needed repairs were completed. One effect of this action was the eviction of a tenant leader shortly afterwards, in what was widely believed to be management retaliation. Management of this building are reported to only make basic repairs in the units when they have no other option—and in those cases, they charge the tenants exorbitant fees for doing so.

Crime and the behavior of some tenants has also been a problem for this building, and police continue to be active here. In fact, during the two-year study period, the police

responded to over 200 calls, which means they had calls to this building an average of twice each week. The incidents involved public drinking, narcotics, child neglect/abuse, fights, disorderly boys, vandalism, weapons, arson, auto theft, burglary and fraud. Analysis of the police calls shows the property clearly has a mix of good and bad tenants. For example, 43 of the approximately 70 units generated no calls for police services during the two years studied. However, some units had as many as 20 calls. These tenants are often single women who rent a unit and are then joined by problem boyfriends. In one unit we looked at, the calls generated clearly spelled out a difficult family situation: child abuse and neglect; domestic assaults, disorderly boys and warrant arrests. In another unit, a different, but related story is told in its calls: disorderly boys, other assault, vandalism, arson, recovery of stolen property and narcotics. In yet another unit, there are only calls about domestics and narcotics. Amazingly, one-third of the calls to the building were to general areas. The incidents in these parts of the building tended to involve disturbances, domestics and narcotics. The sheer volume of these calls indicates two probable dynamics: first, domestic disturbances and assaults that spill out into, or begin in, the general areas of the building; and second, drug dealing and use that is not limited to the private areas of the building, that is to say, in the tenants’ units. Follow-up on the property indicates the behavioral/crime patterns seen during our study period remained largely unchanged in 2001.

The owners claim to screen prospective tenants but some officers do not think they do a very good job of it, if they do it at all. Problems are exacerbated by good tenants leaving as the building deteriorates. Not surprisingly, security at this complex is a continuing problem. Police indicated a complex of this size should have private security on site to maintain order. Although the owners had a security service at one time but dropped it because of the expense.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about this property, from a City perspective, is the extraordinary usage of Fire Department services. Not only has this building required inordinate attention by the Certificate of Occupancy program of Fire Prevention, it also received 51 fire runs and 38 emergency medical services runs in less than two years.

The basic problem with this property is bad management. Furthermore, they make little reinvestment in the property. Given the relatively high rent charged and the high level of occupancy, it is hard to believe that this building would not be a money maker. Indeed, the complex was purchased by its current owners in 1998 for about \$3.75 million, but the tax rolls indicate its market value two years later was only \$2.5 million. The reason for this major difference in valuation is not known, but it does suggest taxes being collected from this property may be far less than its sales price would suggest.

They only make repairs when forced to do so and then often charge tenants exorbitant fees for making such basic repairs. It seems the owners’ objective is to maximize their short-term profits with little regard for the welfare of the tenants or the long-term viability of this apartment building. As a result, they consume an inordinate amount of public services and

Some would argue government does not have the capability to know about all the problem properties. However, in the case of chronic problem properties, the government is almost always aware there are problems, through code inspection, emergency calls, or FORCE surveillance. Notably, a chronic problem property for one agency, such as Code Enforcement, may be just an occasional service user for another, such as the Fire Suppression, or Emergency Medical Services.) The neighborhood could potentially play a larger role in alerting government to problem properties by notifying the police or Code Enforcement before the problems become too overwhelming and complex, thus preventing them from becoming chronic problem properties. What better eyes than a concerned neighbor?

Through this research process, we had difficulty differentiating between individuals being unable or unwilling to address problems with their properties. More often than not, the problem property stems from both an unwillingness and an inability to effectively address the social and physical incivilities at the property. Chronic problem properties present a unique challenge. The causes of chronic problem properties are complex and often unique to each property. It is hard to pinpoint whether physical and social incivilities are due to an unwillingness or inability to participate in mainstream society, or the inability to meet the standards set by a wealthier class. More often than not, our case studies demonstrate how chronic problem properties typically have both physical and social incivilities due to any of the above-mentioned actors being to some extent, both unable and unwilling to effectively deal with the problems located there.

Why are the above-mentioned actors continually unwilling or unable to deal effectively with the social and physical incivilities plaguing a property? One reason may be the continuation of a problem serves a purpose to those who are perpetuating it. For example, the owner may not want to cease exploiting their tenants because they are making a profit off of the high turnover of tenants in a poorly maintained building. An occupant may not want to cease drug dealing because there is a high demand for drugs and they cannot find a better paying source of income. Neighbors may not want to intervene because they are threatened by the residents of a chronic problem property or they wish to continue participation in the social incivilities housed there. Finally, the government may not want to intervene because they do not have the tools available to effectively mitigate the problems and prefer to redirect limited time and resources. In addition, government may not be able to fully intervene due to the laws that protect individuals, such as due process, appeals and rights of property owners.

Ring Concept

Chronic problem properties, by nature, are toxic to the whole community system. Because they are properties with enduring problems, they affect many levels of society, thus creating a breakdown in these systems we usually depend on to curb problem properties. For a problem property to perpetuate into a chronic problem property, the actors must continually be unwilling or unable to change the situation.

The concept of simultaneous “system” failures at the owner/occupant and government levels is captured in Diagram D which for purposes of this study we are calling “Ring Concept.” The way the theory works is that a problem, such as a broken window or uncollected garbage, escapes through each of the “systems” society has in place to correct it. At the core of this diagram is a semi-circle representing ownership, as well as the rights and responsibilities associated with it. A semi-circle is used because the systems society has in place are flexible. The penalties society levies are not so great that there will never be violators. The system failure at this level is that the owner is unable or unwilling to fix the broken window and have the garbage collected.

Diagram D. Ring Concept

The next semi-circle represents occupants and tenants. If the property is rental, the tenant has some rights according to both the lease, if there is one, and state law. Accordingly, a tenant has the right to call to the owner's attention the problem, and request that it be fixed. By exercising their rights and responsibilities, tenants can prevent a problem from continuing. The broken window should be fixed and the garbage collected. If these things do not occur, the tenant can often remove himself or herself from the unit. This system does not work when the occupant is either unable or unwilling to pursue corrective action. Of course in many cases, the owner and occupant are one-in-the-same. In these cases, the protections afforded by leases and state law are of no consequence. Table 4 summarizes who we saw as being responsible for a problem continuing at the owner and occupant levels in our case studies. Clearly, in the vast majority of cases (25 of 32), the owner or landlord is primarily responsible for a problem becoming and continuing to be chronic.

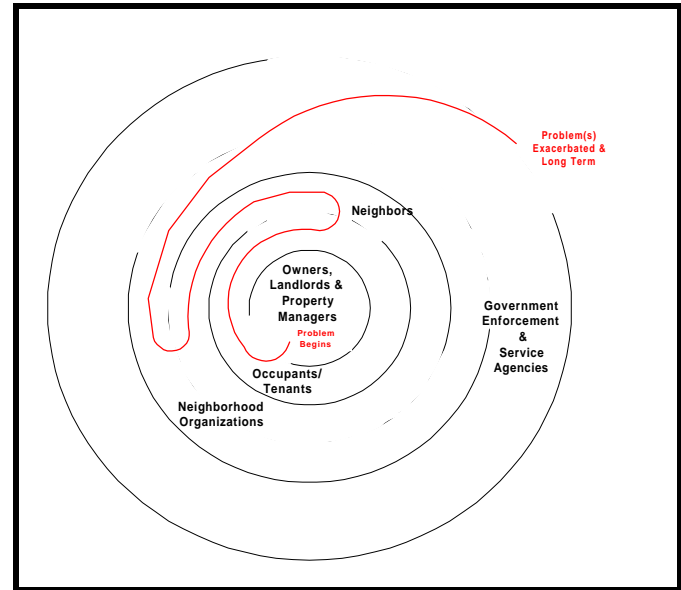


Table 4. Actor Failure Analysis

Actor	Commercial	Owner Occupied	Rental	Total
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	4	11	18	32
Owner Occupant	2 (50%)	9 (81.8%)	0 (0%)	11 (34.4%)
Landlords	2 (50%)	0 (0%)	13 (72.2%)	14 (43.8%)
Tenant	0 (0.0%)	2 (18.2%)	1 (5.6%)	1 (3.1%)
Landlord & Tenant	0 (0.0%)	0 (0%)	4 (22.2%)	6 (18.8%)

The third semi-circle in the diagram represents neighbors and neighborhood organizations. There are basically two options available at this level to help these people who are affected by the still broken window and uncollected garbage. First, they can establish and enforce community standards. Neighbors communicating these standards to the owners and occupants provides informal social control. It may be that a neighbor out raking has the opportunity to voice concerns, or through the maintenance of their own property provide clear expectations of their neighbors. Of course, City ordinances and state laws are meant to codify community standards. The other basic option available to neighbors is to activate enforcement agencies by informing them of the problems and demanding action. It is important to keep in mind that there are many reasons neighbors or neighborhood organizations would be unable or unwilling to pursue either of the options available to them. For example, they may be fatigued from having dealt with similar problems for so long, or they may be afraid of retaliation. In the end, they are reliant upon either the owner or government ultimately taking action to see that the problems are corrected.

The outermost ring represents government enforcement of laws and provision of services. The government can, through its enforcement agencies, mandate that window be repaired and the garbage collected. If it is not, enforcement agents can write a citation and fine the owner for violating the law. The government can also board the broken window, collect the garbage and assess the cost for these services to the property's taxes. However, in order to do these things, the government has to be aware of the problems and agree with the complainant that the problems are indeed violations of the law. There are also limits on government's authority to act and possibly circumscribe individual property rights. Both not knowing about a problem and limits on government's ability to intervene in problems on private property can make government unable to solve the problem. Lastly, government in general, is often quite circumspect in its decision making on when a problem merits government abatement. A City may decide to collect garbage, but not board a broken window. It may choose to condemn a property for certain conditions, but not be willing to make a financial investment in their correction. For example, the government may condemn a house for a large hole in the bathroom floor. It is rather unlikely that the government would actively abate this problem on their own.

In the research process, we have discovered that there need be two system failures for a chronic problem property to develop: the owner and the government must both be unable or unwilling to correct the problems encountered. If the community systems represented in the Ring Concept diagram work when problems arise, those problems will not become chronic. Occupants and tenants, as well as neighborhoods, have some ability to bring about the correction of problems, but they are ultimately reliant upon owners and government to resolve problem situations.

PREDISPOSITION

In the fields of health and wellness, there is often talk of predisposing factors which make it more likely an individual will develop an illness or disease. In some types of cancer, a family history of the cancer makes it more likely that it will develop. For heart disease, being overweight and a smoker make it more likely. The same may be said of chronic problem properties. Although we know that both the government and the owner must be unwilling or unable to correct the problems which present themselves, we believe there are also a number of circumstances that make it more likely that this will be the case. What follows is a discussion of the factors we have identified as likely playing a role in predisposing a property to becoming a chronic problem. However, it is important to note that predisposition is not destiny— just because a particular cancer runs in the family does not mean that all the family's members will get it.

Poverty

While we did not attempt to gather information on the income and wealth of the owners and occupants of the chronic problem properties we studied, it was apparent that these people were, in many cases, living in or near poverty. This level of poverty can be seen in *Motel California*, *Overwhelmed* and *La Cucaracha*. There are several indicators that help in understanding our conclusion on poverty in our case studies. The first of these is the properties' market value. average (mean) market value for the 1- and 2-unit houses we looked at was \$62,011, as is seen in Table 5.

Case Study: Cracking-Up

- Rental Duplex Built in 1893.
- MV: \$59,000, MV per Unit: \$29,500.
- City Taxes: \$214
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$13,294
- Problems: Slumlords, Criminal Activity, Drug Dealing, Prostitution.

“Cracking-Up” is an upper-lower duplex in a neighborhood in trouble. The area’s housing is in generally bad condition and is primarily rental. The residents are a mix of elderly people who have lived in the area for a long time, recent Asian immigrants, poor and uneducated people from a variety of backgrounds and a bunch of rough characters who hang out in the streets intimidating residents and visitors alike. On the surface, it seems that many of the area’s residents are these rough characters living a criminal lifestyle. The immediate area where Cracking-Up is located is notorious for drug crime, in particular, crack dealing.

In the course of our research, we were in this neighborhood on a bright fall Friday afternoon. There we saw many young men in the 20’s, mostly black, congregating, milling and dispersing. Cars full of passengers would pull up to the groups and one or two of the men would poke their head in the car window for awhile. Then the cars would leave, and new ones full of passengers would take their place. As we sat in our station wagon and watched, we were ourselves approached on two occasions by prostitutes.

Not surprisingly, the owners of Cracking-Up are shady characters themselves. The property has passed from one slumlord to another several times since being rehabilitated in 1996, after being vacant for a period of time. Because of the multiple sales for this property in recent years, establishing a clear sequence of ownership is difficult. It has, however, been owned by several notorious slumlords and is now in the hands of an owner some see as an old-time gangster who lives in the suburbs but seems to enjoy the company of the criminals and marginal characters. Though this property has been problematic for a long time, matters have gotten worse under this most recent owner. There has clearly been more criminal activity at this property since its purchase by the current owner in March 2000, and police calls are up dramatically. This may be in part because of the predilections of the new owner, and in part due to his inability to properly manage his property.

The physical problems with this duplex have been limited. There have been some exterior code violations for such

things as paint, maintenance of outbuildings and mattresses in the yard. In recent years there have been three correction notices for trash, paint and screens. In addition, there have been six summary abatements for trash, vehicles and garbage. There have not been any interior violations possibly because of the rather recent rehabilitation and because no inspectors have seen the interior of the duplex in recent years. Also, the building was not in the City’s rental registration program during the study period, though it clearly should have been included.

Behavior problems at this address are extensive and enduring. In fact, police interventions at this address have been little short of amazing. During the study period, the police have been called 164 times for public drinking, narcotics, disorderly boys, disturbances, fights, obstruction of justice, prostitution, aggravated assault, auto theft, liquor law violations and other offenses. Two search warrants were executed for narcotics. In addition, the Fire Departments has responded with four EMS runs and two fire runs.

Occupancy of the duplex is confusing at best. One tenant lives in the downstairs unit with her two children. The upstairs unit was occupied, at least for a while, by a man who was engaged in criminal activity including domestic abuse of the downstairs tenant. The tenant’s sister seems to also live in the downstairs unit. The downstairs tenant is “not very bright” according to many of the staff interviewed, and is believed to be incapable of holding a regular job. She and her sister are also reported to be addicted to crack cocaine and are likely not to maintain control of their residence. Drug dealers are known to frequent this house and also “hang out” on the front porch. Her level of complicity in this drug-dealing activities is unclear. Some see her as involved while other see her as a victim of neighborhood criminals.

This is generally a lousy situation with no apparent remedy short of a government intervention. A ranking officer in the Saint Paul Police Department had explored the option of possibly getting this woman into a prostitution prevention, recovery and rehabilitation program—to no avail. We have a drug-addicted prostitute tenant with her prostitute sister living in a building owned by a landlord of questionable competence and even more questionable motives. The neighborhood is full of drug-dealers and other criminals who further contribute to this unsavory situation. The City responds to police and fire calls plus occasional visits by inspectors to deal with specific situations. The core problems remain unresolved and, for the most part, unaddressed. Without a massive intervention by City and County agencies, this problem will continue with only the owners and tenants changing from time to time.

As a post script, the level of police calls to the property were down slightly in 2001, but the type and seriousness of the calls remained largely unchanged. However, prostitution, auto theft and aggravated assault were not reported; but fraud, robbery and gambling were reported in 2001 and not reported in the study period. Notably, although there were fewer calls to this property in 2001 than in the previous two years, the number of reports written by the police was up

Table 5. Market Value Averages Information

			Residential		
			1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>			19	9	4
MV Used by Ramsey County for 2000 Taxes	median	\$57,500	\$53,600	\$197,450	\$94,200
	mean		\$62,011	\$446,838	\$139,367
MV <i>Per Unit</i> Using Ramsey Co. 2000 Taxes	mean	\$39,495	\$48,561	\$20,316	N/A

A second indicator of the level of poverty at these properties is the level of tax delinquency in our case studies. Table 6 shows that 11 of the 32 properties studied, fully one-third, were delinquent in paying property taxes during our study period. In one case, *Brothers Grim*, the property was seized as a tax forfeiture six months after our study period. In two other cases, *Empty Promise* and *Dirty Dealing*, failure to make payments on contracts for deed led to the house reverting to its original owner.

Table 6. Tax Delinquency

Tax Delinquency Status	Commercial	Owner Occupied	Rental	Total/Average
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	4	11	18	32
Yes	1 25.0%	3 27.3%	7 38.9%	11 34.4%
Average Amount Owed	\$12,611	\$6,027	\$3,817	\$5,219
Average Years Delinquent	2	2.7	1.4	1.8

A third indicator of the poverty encountered at these properties is the number of utility shut-offs they had. Eleven of the properties, or one-third, had gas, electric or water service shut-off for nonpayment during our study period. Table 7 shows the majority of these were shut-offs of electricity.

Table 7. Utility Shut-Offs

Code Violation	Commercial	Owner Occupied	Rental	Total/Average
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	4	11	18	32
Water Shutoff/Malfunction	1 25.0%	3 27.3%	1 5.3%	5 15.6%
Electricity	1 25.0%	2 18.2%	5 26.3%	8 25.0%
Gas	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 10.5%	2 6.3%

Taken together, these low property values, delinquent taxes and utility shut-offs lead us to believe that poverty makes it more likely that an owner or occupant will be unable or unwilling to take action. For owners this may mean they lack the financial where-with-all to fix what needs to be fixed. For tenants, this may mean that because of their own financial distress,

Case Study: Errant Investor I

- Rental Duplex Built in 1893.
- MV: \$53,600 MV per Unit: \$26,800.
- City Taxes: \$219
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$2,985
- Problems: Absent Drug-Addicted Landlord, Drug Dealing, Intimidation, Later a Vacant Property.

“Errant Investor I” is a vacant upper-lower duplex in the North End. This duplex is one of many buildings owned by this investor. In fact, until recently, this individual owned or co-owned most of the buildings on the entire block. The owner’s family has been prominent and influential in the area for many years occupying a mansion and acting as a kind of feudal baronage for the immediate surrounding area. Until slipping to addiction in 1998, the owner was viewed as a clever and effective real estate investor and property manager, who was a major asset to the community. Unfortunately, his increasingly frequent relapses into addiction have resulted in one of the City’s best property managers becoming one of the worst.

This property was in terrible physical condition during the study period. The City condemned it in January 2000 because of problems with all of the major physical systems including plumbing, heat, water, stove refrigerator, toilets, smoke detectors, doors and windows. Health hazards also involved rodents, insects and garbage build-up inside the building. The exterior also evidences a myriad of problems ranging from tall weeds and grass to roof, trim, doors and locks. The City and the community have been very active in trying to do something with this building. In recent years the City has issued five work orders, seven summary abatement orders and two correction orders on this

property besides the condemnation that led to it becoming vacant. There have been problems with squatters since the building went vacant and the police and Code Enforcement are monitoring the property for illegal occupancy.

Prior to this building becoming vacant, it was a source of continuing behavioral problems. The FORCE Unit raided the building in 1995 and again in 1998. In 1999 alone, the police responded to 22 calls for service involving domestic abuse, assaults and narcotics. The FORCE Unit also conducted two “Knock and Talks” at this address. The excessive police calls to this property go back more than five years with a brief hiatus when the “Errant Investor” first acquired the property.

As suggested earlier, the core problem with this property is the owner. He bought this property, and many others, in 1995 and began managing them quite effectively. He paid the taxes, cleaned-up the property; screened and managed his tenants. Then in 1998, he fell victim to drug addiction and ceased caring for his properties. Some neighbors even believe he began, sometimes, exchanging rent for drugs and sexual favors. Taxes were no longer paid and the buildings and the quality of tenants deteriorated precipitously. The City tried to deal with the situation but to little avail. These matters then went to Housing Court which was also ineffective in addressing the situation. Eventually the owner was convicted and required to serve a brief period in jail and pay moderate fines. The Housing Court Referee also provided that a portion of the jail time and fines could be waived provided he participate in a chemical addiction assessment and sell his properties. For a period of several months, he was missing and eventually was apprehended in the fall of 2001 when a routine traffic stop led to the discovery of the outstanding housing court warrants. Meanwhile, this duplex has been rehabilitated and sold on a

they cannot afford to lose the “roof over their heads” by complaining. However, not all the chronic problem properties we examined had poverty, and in no case was it the only thing “going wrong” preventing the problems from getting fixed. Finally, although it may seem self-evident, not all those who are poor live in or own chronic problem properties. In fact, given that some 11 percent of the City’s population lives in poverty,⁹ and less than 1 percent of its properties are chronic problems, it is clear that most do not.

Property Conditions

The condition of the property at the time its current residents move in is also a factor which may predispose it to becoming a chronic problem. Its age, the quality of the original construction and how it has been maintained play a role in how likely problems are to develop— just as these factors are important in how a used car will probably perform. While we did not assess the quality of these properties’ original construction, we do know a lot about their age, how they were maintained in the five years preceding our study period, and their current conditions (which will be discussed in the next chapter, *Living with Chronic Problem Properties*).

Table 8. Chronic Problem Property Status Prior to Study Period (1994-98)

	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Chronic Problem Property	12 63.2%	8 88.9%	0 0%	20 62.5%
Not Chronic Problem Property	7 36.8%	1 11.1%	4 100%	12 37.5%

As we reviewed files from the Police Department, Fire Department and Code Enforcement, and other City agencies, we made determinations in each case about whether it was a chronic problem property in the five-year time period preceding the study, from 1994 through 1998. Table 8 shows that almost two-thirds of the case studies were chronic problem properties earlier, which suggests these problems are slow in resolving— as is the case with *Weird Neighbor* because of its long-term incomplete home improvement project. Moreover though, it suggests that the immediate presenting problem, whether it is a broken window, uncollected garbage or out-of-control children, was not what we needed to be examining. In only a few cases were the problems a continuation of the same problems. In most cases, however, the problems seemed not to be a continuation, but rather new problems with the same, or similar, root causes. The underlying problems that created the circumstances that allowed problems to grow and remain uncorrected. A clear example of this pattern is seen in *Double Gross* and also in *La Cucaracha*. Notably, none of the four commercial properties we looked at would have been categorized as a chronic problem property before our study. However, nearly 90 percent of the multi-unit residential buildings would have been, as would over 60 percent of the one- and two-family houses.

In general, the properties we looked at were relatively old, an average of 91 years old. One- and two-unit houses were the oldest, averaging 100 years old, and all of them were constructed before World War II. In the entire population of the City’s housing units, approximately 47 percent

⁹ The eleven percent poverty rate is a “best-estimate,” based on information reviewed by the City’s Planning and Economic Development Department from the 2000 Census Supplemental Survey.

Case Study: Errant Investor II

- Rental Duplex built in 1884.
- MV: \$39,100; MV per unit: \$19,550.
- City Taxes: \$163
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$1,695
- Problems: Absent Drug-Addicted Landlord, Garbage, Vehicles, Occasional Criminal Activity.

“Errant Investor II” is the second of two properties included in this study owned by the same problem landlord. The inclusion of two properties owned by the same person reflects the large number of problem properties owned by this investor. Indeed he owed over 30 properties at one time, including more than half the houses on the City block where our two case studies are located. When he was in his good days, he was seen as a savior for this neighborhood. Since he fell into drug addiction, his personal and financial problems coupled with his large holdings have created a problem of major proportions.

This particular property was built as a single family home in 1884 and later converted into a duplex. It is kind of a cute looking house from the outside, although it is very small for a duplex. The yard has, however, been the major source of problems. During a recent two year period, the City conducted five summary abatements and two vehicle abatements at this address. The owner has received many correction orders to clean-up mattresses, furniture, appliances, vehicles, garbage and tall weeds. Despite these numerous orders and abatements, the property continues to

experience general neglect of the exterior. Following our study period, the property was condemned for a time as the water was shut off for nonpayment. It is also apparent that for a number of months, no one was managing the property and the tenants paid no rent.

Because duplexes are not subject to Certificate of Occupancy inspections, City inspectors have never had access to the interior of the building. NEAR did, however, conduct a walk-through of the building when they were considering purchasing it for rehabilitation. This walk-through led them to conclude the building was not salvageable and they dropped their interest in the property.

The police were called to this property 18 times during our study period. These calls involved narcotics, domestic assault, aggravated assault and warrants.* They wrote reports for about half these calls suggesting the incidents were substantive in nature. One of these calls related to a late summer evening shooting that occurred on the front porch of the house. In this case, a former and current boyfriend of the tenant were involved. Sadly, only one neighbor bothered to call about the shots being fired.

This is among the worst of the many bad properties held by this owner. The City tried just about everything to deal with this situation including attempting to confront the owner through the PP2000 initiative. Nothing the City has tried has worked. In the fall of 2001, this property was sold to a developer who did some minor rehabilitation. It is currently on the market, and the same tenants continue to reside there.

were built prior to World War II. Three- and four-unit tended to follow a similar age pattern, as can be seen in Table 9. However, larger, multi-family buildings were built mostly after World War II. A notable finding in reviewing the data was that all six of the buildings which were vacant during the study period were over 100 years old, including *Dirty Dealing*, *Empty Promise* and *Errant Investor I*.

Table 9. Building Age

Building Age	Residential			Total/ Average
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Average Age	100	75	51	91
100+ Years Old (Built Pre-1900)	11 (52.9%)	4 (44.4%)	0	15 (46.9%)
62+ Years Old (Built 1900 - 1939)	8 (92.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0	8 (25.0%)
< 62 Years Old (Built 1940 - Present)	0	8 (92.1%)	1 (25.0%)	5 (15.6%)
Unknown Age	0	1 (11.1%)	3 (75.0%)	4 (12.5%)

Surroundings

Several neighborhood, or geographic, factors play a role in the likelihood of a chronic problem property developing. The first of these is the concentration of poverty. As we discussed earlier, the income and wealth of the key individuals involved, namely the owner or landlord and the occupant or tenant, makes it more or less likely that chronic problems will develop. But poverty is also a geographic phenomenon. Although not all poor people live in “poor” neighborhoods, there are neighborhoods which have significantly lower average incomes than other neighborhoods. This lack of resources has the power to predispose not just an individual property, but entire neighborhoods to chronic problem property development.

In addition to poverty having potentially negative impact on individual properties and neighborhoods, so can the presence of blight. Sometimes blight may take the form of physical decline and dilapidation of surrounding buildings. It may also include the crimes and behaviors of people who contribute to the general sense of disorder in the area. Not surprisingly, the existence of other chronic problem properties in the surrounding area has these effects and contributes to the neighborhood’s decline. Several of our case studies were so situated. *Errant Investor I and II* are on the same City block, and near other problem, or chronic problem properties. *Cash Cow* is a large apartment building in the midst of other large apartment buildings in similar circumstances. *Nasty Four* and *Down ‘N Out* are neighbors, as are *Career Criminals* and *Fear Factor*. Finally, *Cracking Up* is in a small area of the City known for many kinds of problems. As discussed in the methodology section of the Introduction, many of the properties nominated for the study were a part of a cluster.

Case Study: Gangster Boyfriend

- Single Family Rental built in 1888.
- MV: \$42,300.
- City Taxes: \$150
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$2,845
- Problems: Criminal Companion, Disorderly Boys, Drugs, Probable Child and Animal Neglect.

“Gangster Boyfriend” is a single family rental property that was registered as a vacant building for 15 months until it was rehabilitated and sold to a property investment company in February of 1998. The current landlords appeared to be buying the property on a contract for deed from the property investment company. They, in turn, rented the property to a woman believed to be a family friend. Interestingly, even though this property is rental, the taxpayers have claimed a homestead exemption for this property. We have advised the County Assessor of this situation and he is investigating for possible fraud. The home is in good physical condition and there are no known violations of City codes with respect to the interior. There have, however, been several exterior violations for such things as garbage, abandoned vehicles, furniture and tires.

The serious problems with this property began in

January 2000. In the ensuing ten months there were problems of every sort. The police were called 24 times to deal with disturbances, disorderly boys and noise violations. Drug use and alcohol abuse began to create fear among the neighbors. The FORCE unit, the Gang Strike Force and Family Intervention all worked on this address. The emergence of all these problems coincided with the primary tenant becoming involved with a notorious local gangster who lived there on an intermittent basis. He was believed to have a number of women companions throughout the City, and was said to have moved from one woman's home to another's on a regular basis. The tenant, and perhaps another woman who also lived in this home, seem to be unable to care for themselves and their children. Even their animals suffered from neglect leading to several interventions by Animal Control.

The neighbors were very active and attempted to organize to deal with this situation. The Block Club met extensively and the District Council attempted to be of assistance. Finally the situation came to a head in October 2000. The Gang Strike Force came to the property and arrested, with considerable fanfare, the gangster boyfriend. Shortly afterwards, the landlord evicted the tenant and the property became quiet again, which it has remained through 2001. The evicted tenant has moved to another Saint Paul address and it remains to be seen if problems follow. Currently, the property is reportedly vacant and for sale.

Vacant Buildings and Abandonment

Another dominant feature in the landscape of chronic problem properties is vacancy and abandonment— both for the chronic problem properties themselves and the surrounding area. Table 10 shows that 6 of our 32 case studies experienced an extended period of vacancy between 1994 and the end of 2000. In a typical year, about 400 of the City’s buildings are registered as vacant with the City, representing one-half of one percent of the City’s 79,000 properties. In our study, 19 percent were vacant in the seven years we examined. Notably, almost all of the vacant properties in this study are one- and two-unit residences, which were all more than 100 years old. Often these properties were not the only vacant buildings in their neighborhoods. When we were out in the neighborhoods looking at the chronic problem properties in our study, it was clear that some of these areas were checkered with vacant and abandoned buildings.

Table 10. Registered Vacant Building Status 1994-2000

	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Registered Vacant Building	5 (26.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	6 (18.8%)
Never A Registered Vacant Building	14 (73.7%)	9 (100.0%)	3 (75.0%)	26 (81.3%)

Abandonment of a property is relatively hard to determine looking at ownership alone. What we can determine is when the owner has not taken steps which to keep the property occupied and useful. What this tended to look like in our review of the property’s records were situations where 1) property taxes were in arrears, putting the property in danger of becoming a tax forfeiture (see Table 6); or 2) needed rehabilitation and maintenance were neglected, so that a building remained vacant over a long period of time. Abandonment also involved the “disappearance” of an owner for a currently occupied property, as was the case in *Errant Investor II* and *Old and Ugly*.

Each of the factors— concentrated poverty, clustering of chronic problem properties, vacancy and abandonment— are different. None of them, alone or together, is a predictor of chronic problem property development. They are instead factors that can predispose individual properties and neighborhoods to developing chronic problems. In our research we saw a significant number of chronic problem properties which were not in “poor” areas with high levels of vacant and abandoned buildings. We did, however, note that these factors may predispose properties in some areas to becoming chronic problems.

Personal and Behavioral Factors

Several personal and behavioral characteristics of the key actors involved, namely the owner or landlord and the occupant or tenant, makes it more likely that problems will become chronic at a particular property. Although these are discussed throughout the study, we will touch on them here as well, because we believe they can make a difference in the likelihood of a chronic problem property developing. Recall our earlier discussion in this chapter of individual actors being unwilling or unwilling to address the problems which they face. In each case, it is our contention that both the owner and the government must be unwilling to correct problems.

Case Study: Over the Edge

- 3 Unit Rental Built in 1891.
- MV: \$56,000; MV per Unit: \$18,667
- City Taxes: \$305
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$4,437
- Problems: Baby Death, Narcotics, Doors and Locks, Trash, Possible Racism.

“Over the Edge” is an ugly old house with a former abandoned commercial space attached to its front. It is currently configured as a triplex, although County records show it to be a duplex. The house is an “eyesore” occupied by very poor and “scary” people, reportedly attracted to the building because of its relatively low rent and lack of tenant screening. The unit in the front “old commercial” section of the house has been notorious among community and police officials for years for reported drug activity. This triplex is owned by two investors, both of whom own a few other rental properties according to Ramsey County tax data.

The building has passed Certificate of Occupancy inspections except correction orders regarding doors and locks on the inside. The City condemned one unit in July 1999 because of a utility shut-off for nonpayment. The exterior has been more of a problem with many correction orders for doors and locks, garbage, furniture in yard, abandoned vehicles and tall weeds. Animal Control came to the property several times in the fall of 1999 to address dog concerns. The owners have responded to these correction orders, albeit slowly. One tag was issued to the owner in December 2000 for failing to comply with Certificate of Occupancy requirements.

Police have been called to this address 21 times during a two-year period. For a triplex of this type, this is a relatively low number. The police have been called to respond to disturbances, narcotics, disorderly boys, theft, burglary and the death of a child. In addition to

these official calls, there have been reports of violence that spills into the street, public drinking, domestic violence, child neglect and drug activity. The FORCE unit investigated this property in the summers of 1999 and 2000. In both cases investigations were conducted into alleged drug use and sales. In 1999 FORCE conducted surveillance on four occasions, attempted a drug purchase and conducted a “Knock & Talk.” In June 2000, the FORCE unit executed a search warrant and made several arrests. From August of 2000 through June of 2001 there were no calls for police service to this property. Beginning in July 2001, old patterns re-established themselves, and late in the year a domestic-related aggravated assault occurred here.

The problems at this property suggested the need for social service intervention and the County conducted an assessment. That assessment suggested a large part of the problem was due to the racist attitudes of the neighbors. The neighbors countered this by stating that their concerns were not being taken seriously and they wanted more input into the assessment process, as they were very concerned about what they were seeing at this property. The relatively low number of police calls suggests that the neighbors may have given up on calling the police except for their most serious concerns. They may have just come to tolerate a level of criminal activity at this location. This changed, however, when a tenant’s child died in the building from being smothered when a drunken parent rolled-over on the child while sleeping. This tragic event drove neighbors over-the-edge concerning their tolerance of the misbehavior in their midst. Nonetheless, the property continues to be an unresolved problem for the neighborhood and City. It demonstrates how the lines between code violations, nuisance crime, domestic abuse and child neglect can converge. The problems simply become a festering sore which infects the neighborhood with fatigue, hampering residents ability to address problems proactively. Additionally, the element of reported racism, whether real or not, worked to drive a wedge between the actors, disheartening those involved.

Chronic problem situations often develop because the owners, occupants and tenants do not take the actions available to them. So, why would someone act this way? In addition to our sociological discussion of deviance, we think it is necessary to point out some of the most common personal and behavioral characteristics we came across that helped create or complicated the problems at these properties.

Alcohol and drug abuse is a dominant feature in our case studies. There are two ways to gauge whether alcohol abuse was a problem for the properties we studied. The first was looking at the reason for, and disposition of, police calls. If there were calls labeled “drunk” as the reason for requesting police service, or calls where the disposition was to take someone to “detox,” we could be fairly sure alcohol or drug abuse had reached a critical level.

Table 24 indicates the number of times taking a person to detox was the outcome of a call for police service. We also relied on the people we interviewed to tell us this kind of information. Although we had no specific question relating to drug or alcohol use, when we asked why a property had become a chronic problem, they often volunteered information on the role of drugs and alcohol. *Over the Edge*, *Misplaced* and *Down ‘N Out* all have serious problems related to alcohol and possibly drug use. Thirty-seven percent of the properties had at least one public drinking episode during our study period. The majority of our case studies (59%) had drug or narcotics-related problems. In many cases, the properties were occupied by relatively low-level drug dealers, who used dealing as a way to support their addiction. This type of situation existed in *Errant Investor I*, *Dirty Dealing* and *Danger Island*.

The presence of domestic violence dominated the landscape of chronic properties we examined. As we discuss more in depth in the next chapter, 88 percent of our case studies had at least one episode of domestic violence during our study period. In almost all cases, the numbers were much higher. Domestic violence was the most prominent feature of all of our case studies. This situation, although altogether too common, is perhaps best discussed in *Overwhelmed* and *Errant Investor II*.

In each case, we may surmise that alcoholism, drug abuse or violence complicates the problems already present at these properties. Another conclusion we may draw is that these are the underlying problems at these properties, and the other things we see, whether it be uncollected garbage, broken windows or dog fights, are symptoms. Both of these conclusions are valid. Our focus is on the problems propensity to occur together with the other issues surrounding chronic problem properties.

LIVING WITH THE PROBLEMS

Up to this point, this study has discussed in general terms what chronic problem properties are, and who is affected or harmed by them. In *Living with the Problems*, we will discuss in depth how they look, feel, and even smell to those who are harmed by them. The case studies have numerous instances of health, housing and property maintenance code violations, which we can use, along with other information, to describe the appearance and habitability of these properties. We also use police department call information and FORCE unit materials to describe the crimes occurring at these properties. Equally important, however, is the issue of who is harmed by the existence of these properties, and this is where we begin.

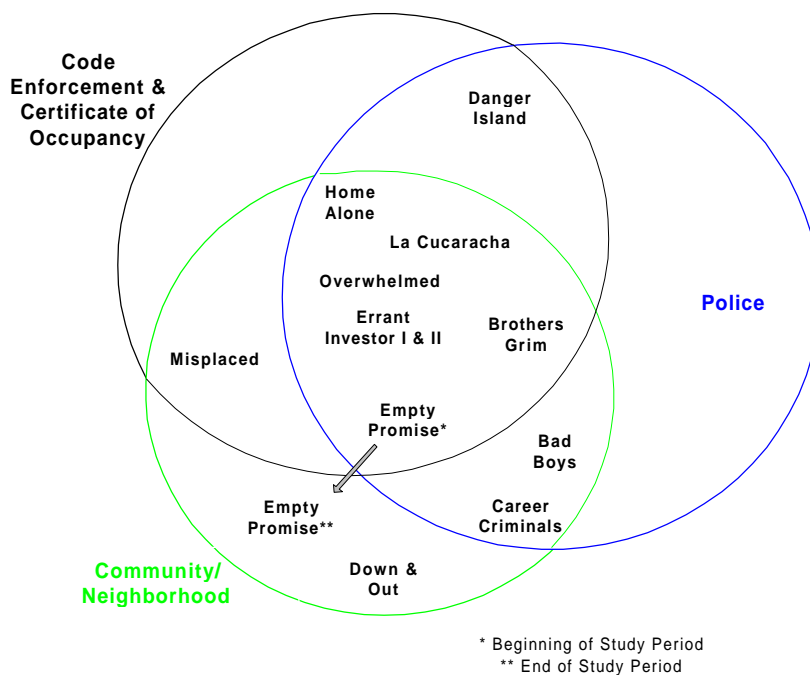
WHO IS HARMED?

At an abstract level, we can fairly say the entire community is hurt by a chronic problem property. We can surmise that all property values are lowered a little, and the quality of life for all decreases when blight and fear conditions are introduced anywhere. But we all do not live in, next to, or down the street from this type of property—even if we are aware of a few of them. In order to get a better grasp of who is harmed by these properties and what their experiences are, we discuss neighbors, government agencies, tenants and occupants in this context.

Neighbors and Government Agencies

Diagram E. To Whom Is A Property A Chronic Problem

We began our research process at the neighborhood organization and City level by having neighborhood organizers, elected officials and enforcement staff identify chronic problem properties in their areas of responsibility. As discussed in the Research Methods, on page 5, not everyone identified the same properties. Astonishingly, only 11 percent of the properties on our list of nominations were nominated by more than one person. However, in most cases, even though one person did not nominate a property and another did, there was general agreement that it, too, was a chronic problem property. In a few cases, we were surprised to find that there was not agreement between our key constituencies as to whether a particular property was a chronic problem. Diagram E shows, for example, that *Bad Boys* was a chronic problem for the neighborhood and Police, but not for Code Enforcement. On reflection this makes sense. *Bad Boys* had no serious exterior code violations, so it passed largely under the radar



of Code Enforcement staff. Similarly, *Misplaced* was a chronic problem for the Certificate of Occupancy Program and the neighborhood, but not for Police.

The lessons to be learned from this are best portrayed in several other case studies. *Empty Promise* began the study period as duplex occupied by a drug addict and his drug using tenants. The property had numerous code violations and ended up being condemned. Following condemnation, it became a registered vacant building and on at least two occasions was occupied by squatters. While it was occupied it was very much a concern of Code Enforcement officials. After it was a secure vacant building and squatters were eliminated, it became only an occasional concern of Code Enforcement, as it monitored the building to ensure it was secure. Similarly, *Empty Promise* was of little concern to Police once it became vacant. However, during the entire study period, it was perceived by the neighborhood to be a chronic problem— first, as an “active” problem with problem occupants, then as a more “passive” problem as a dilapidated building standing as a reminder of problems present in the neighborhood.

In another case, *Down ‘N Out*, the neighborhood believed the use of the building to be a chronic problem. Although. The City’s Certificate of Occupancy Program and Police Department had a fair level of activity, the thing that made this a chronic problem was its use as a rooming house for marginal “down and out” characters in the midst of a residential neighborhood of mostly one and two-unit residences. In the reverse situation of *Down ‘N Out*, *Danger Island* was seen as a chronic problem by City Certificate of Occupancy Program and Police Department, but not the neighborhood. The geographic isolation of *Danger Island* keeps it from being a serious problem to neighbors to the property. However, the extremely high level of service required of inspectors and police officers signals the depth of problems within this building.

Tenants and Occupants

The situation at *Danger Island* opens up another level of questions. If the neighbors do not seem to be affected by the problems at this property, to whom is it a problem? The answer is, of course, the tenants who live in the building. Diagram F shows one part of the dynamic. In this diagram, we see what proportion of units generate the most calls for police service in the multi-unit buildings included in our study. In a couple of cases, including *Danger Island*, more than half of the units generate high levels of calls for police service. There are also units which generate almost no such demands. Therefore, we assume that at least in most cases, the individuals in these units are not generating the problems. Instead, these units tend to be occupied by people who experience the problems as victims. They also seem to lack the ability, financially or otherwise, to remove themselves from the chronic problem property. *Danger Island* is the most extreme example of a property which has a majority of units in trouble. Another layer of problems for *Danger Island*, as with many multi-unit buildings, is the shared space of the building. We consistently found that the general areas of the building generated more calls than any individual unit. In these spaces there were disturbances, drug dealing and use, domestic arguments and assaults, fights and aggravated assaults, among other problems. Problem units, coupled with problem shared space in the building, work to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation for those who are not a part of generating the problems.

Case Study: Through the Cracks

- Rental Duplex built in 1889.
- MV: \$49,500; MV per unit: \$24,750.
- City Taxes: \$180
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$6,307
- Problems: Revolving Bad Tenants, Tenant Intimidation of Neighbors, Garbage, City Dropped Ball.

“Through the Cracks” is a rather unassuming duplex located in the middle of a block among a number of other similar properties. Problems with this property have continued for many years. The current owner, who owns several similar rental properties in the same Saint Paul neighborhood, bought this property in 1987 and has realized a significant appreciation in its value. The complaints to the City about this property are mainly about the failure of the owner to make needed corrections and the behavior of tenants, as the owner did not seem to be screening tenants.

The tenants disturb and, sometimes, frighten their neighbors. There is a lot of drinking, hassling and intimidating behavior. At least one neighbor, a Hmong woman, reported being terrified for herself and her family. Despite concern about the behavior of the tenants, the police have not received many calls about this address. They have been called 15 times during our study period and have written five reports about incidents at this address for aggravated assault, the execution of warrants, domestic assault, narcotics and interfering with 911. The FORCE Unit attempted an unsuccessful drug buy in September 2000 and attempted a “Knock & Talk” in November 2000, only to find the tenants in question in the process of moving

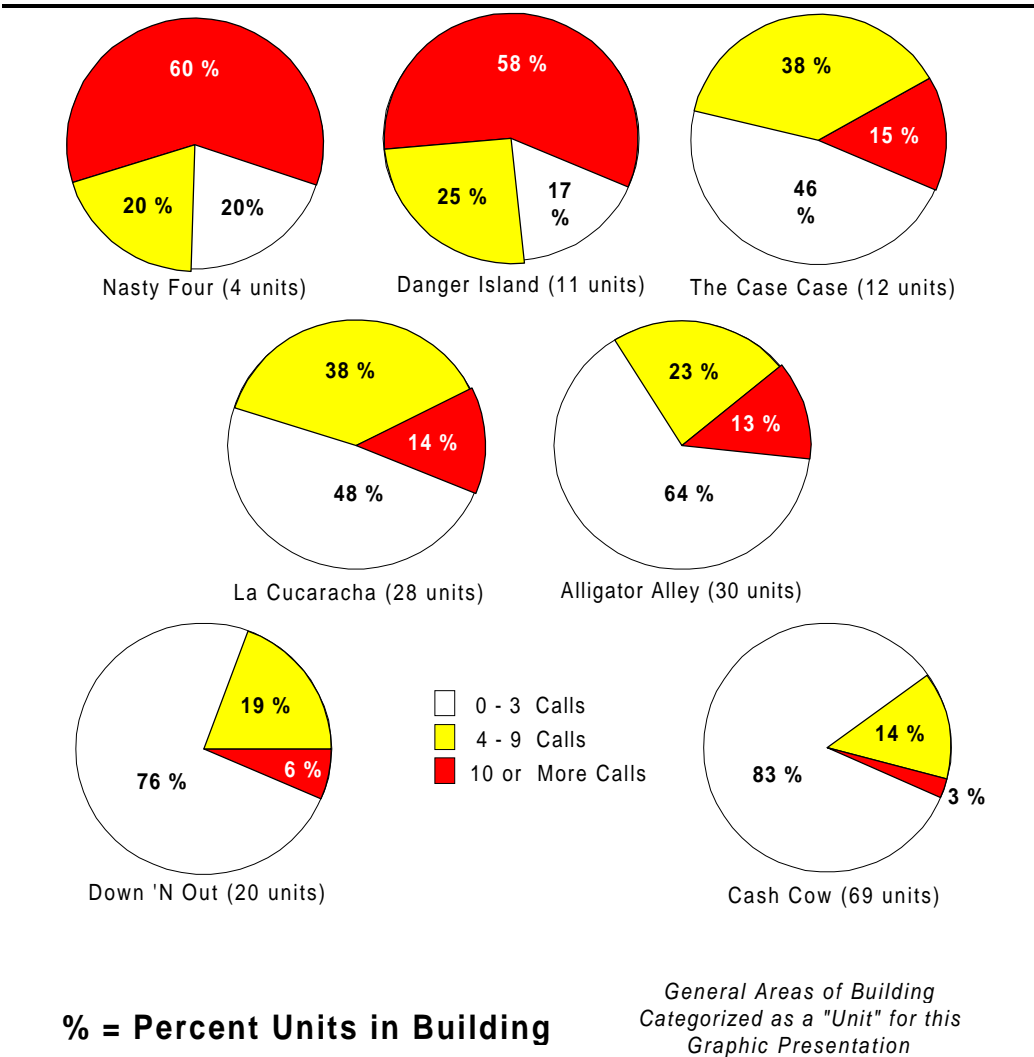
out. In May 2001 an arrest was made for drug law violations.

The City has responded to seven code complaints during the study period by conducting three summary abatements and three vehicle abatements. The summary abatements have primarily involved garbage, glass, a toilet, a bathtub, diapers, old food and overflowing garbage containers. The consistency of the garbage problems suggests the owner does not have a regular garbage pick-up service. The building has also had problems on the interior with heat, electricity and water damage. The exterior has experienced problems with garbage, windows and abandoned vehicles. On at least one occasion a complaint about this property was mishandled by the City. A tenant called Citizens Service in November 1999 to complain about no bathtub, electrical problems, ceiling leaking, inadequate heat and no window glass. Code Enforcement did not respond to this complaint until fully five months later when an inspector finally responded. For some reason, despite the seriousness of the complaint, the matter seems to have been referred to the Dayton’s Bluff Initiative rather than being handled directly by Code Enforcement. When the City finally did respond to this complaint, the complaining tenant had long since moved.

This property continues to hover “just below” the City’s radar and the conditions that make it likely to remain a chronic problem property are still present. The conditions include poverty, a distinct lack of neighborhood cohesion, no tenant screening, an uninvolved owner and generally bad neighborhood conditions. While things may have improved at this property because some of the worse tenants have moved on, the City clearly “dropped the ball” with

The other key group of tenants or occupants affected by the existence of the problem unit, are those who live within the unit or property. In many cases, those within these problem units or properties are generating the problems being experienced. However, within these units there often lives a family or partner. There are many examples in this case study where all of the family members actively contribute to chronic problems, as is the case with *Bad Boys*, *Cracking Up* and *Career Criminals*. However, there are also many examples where people within the chronic problem property or unit are also victims. We see this clearly in *Brothers Grim*, *Errant Investor II* and *Overwhelmed* where domestic violence is present, as it is in 88 percent of our cases. In *Gangster Boyfriend* though, we see a different, but similar situation. In this case study, there is no reported domestic violence *per se*, rather the problem is the boyfriend's other criminal activities, such as drug dealing or dog fighting. In this case study, he introduces the problems into the household.¹⁰

Diagram F. Multi-Unit Apartment Buildings, Calls for Police Service for Individual Units



¹⁰ Notably, this was also the case with *Career Criminals* where the nephews introduced criminal activity to the property. In *Career Criminals*, however, there was information to lead us to believe the uncle was a part of the nephews criminal endeavors.

Case Study: Home Alone

- Owner Occupied Duplex Built in 1906.
- MV: \$83,800; MV per Unit: \$41,900.
- City Taxes: \$454
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$1,709
- Problems: Tall Weeds, Domestic Violence, Child Protection.

“Home Alone” is an average looking duplex, where one unit is homesteaded, while the other unit is rental. It is located in a relatively stable, but lower income neighborhood, and in many ways, this house is not distinguishable from its neighbors. We have no information regarding the interior of the building other than the gas and electric were shutoff briefly several years ago. However, this duplex is in the rental registration program, and thus inspectors could have gained access. The exterior has experienced some problems in recent years because of problems with windows, tall weeds and grass, vehicles, mattresses and sewer. Code Enforcement has received five calls complaining about this property. Subsequent inspections noting violations of the building maintenance code have resulted in two summary abatements for tall weeds and trash in the yard. A citation was also issued for the exterior and tall weeds.

What really makes this property stand out among its neighbors is the sense of fear and unease it brings. The police have been called to this property 17 times

during the study period. Many of the calls have been for nuisance violations such as public drinking and disturbances. However, a number of the calls have been for more serious matters such as domestic assault and fraud. Gunshots have also been heard in the backyard. The most serious calls, however, have involved child neglect. In one instance child protection was called in when it was discovered that the parents had left very small children alone in the backyard for many hours. Evidently, the parents were too drunk to notice the children missing, or the passage of time. These neglectful parents greatly concern the neighbors and social service agencies.

It is unclear from the records we reviewed whether this property is owner-occupied. The owner does not accept any responsibility for problems with the tenants. While the property appears to be owner-occupied, from the fact that the property is homesteaded, it is also in the rental registration program, which is not a requirement for owner-occupied duplexes. We believe, for at least some of the study period, a relative of the owner lived in the house, thus meeting state law requirements for homesteading. However, for the majority of the study period, this was not the case.

While there are certainly City issues with the maintenance of this property and some criminal behavior, the most concerning problems are social service and child protection issues. The resolution of these types of problems are matters for the County to address. Beyond police intervention, there is little that the City can do to resolve child neglect concerns. This

WHEN ARE PEOPLE ACTUALLY HARMED?

When thinking about chronic problem properties, some specific properties, neighborhoods and situations are conjured up in each of our minds. There are conditions out there that “just bug us.” That fact alone does not necessarily mean one is faced with a violation of laws or property codes. Part of what happens in neighborhoods today is that people with differing standards of behavior and property maintenance are brought together, into close proximity with one another. For example, experience, past history and upbringing may tell one that certain things are done one way, and another’s may say it should be done another way. As cities become increasingly diverse, this situation is likely to continue.

Differing standards and expectations of behavior and property maintenance can be seen between different cities; some would say Saint Paul has a look and a feel that is quite different than Minneapolis. It can be seen between neighborhoods, like Dayton’s Bluff— which is one of the older neighborhoods in the City and has a history of working and upper classes living near one another, and Highland— where the residents tend to be middle and upper class and most of the housing was built in the twentieth century, for people moving into their second homes. City’s have historically handled the differing standards and expectations of its citizens by building distinctive neighborhoods which were often made up of people who were primarily of one cultural background. But neighborhood characters’ have changed over time, often for the better, as with lessening racial geographic concentration and increased housing opportunities. This coupled with immigration makes our neighborhoods, particularly those with affordable housing opportunities, more diverse than ever.

In *Cultural Conflict*, people who have lived in the neighborhood for years, with an established set of values and standards, are confronted with people who are new to the neighborhood and may not share the same set of values. In this case study, the neighboring white residents were O.K. with an outdoor party and drinking, as long as it take place in the backyard. The African American people who lived in *Cultural Conflict*, would have parties and drink on the front porch, where people from inner-cities have more traditionally congregated. The case study evens mentions a case where neighbors called the police because some tenant’s children were playing jump rope in the street. *Cultural Conflict* was also a very poorly maintained property with many exterior code violations. The situation at this property brings to light issues inspectors and police officers have to deal with every day: in a complaint-based system of Code Enforcement and law enforcement, we rely on people to notify the authorities when something is amiss. However, people respond to more than just strict violations of laws and codes. They respond to things that are different than what they are accustomed to, and also to those things and people which scare them.

Another case where a chronic problem property triggered reactions from neighbors is *Down ‘N Out*. Here, the standards of behavior and property maintenance are noticeably different than the surrounding area. In this case study, it was more the land use than racism or specific cultural differences coming into play. *Down ‘N Out* is a single room occupancy apartment building with a high level of drinking and drug use, and from the neighborhood perspective, it is a locally unwanted land use (lulu).

The last type of situation which deserves consideration in this discussion is that of the crazy neighbor. Anyone who has staffed phone lines in an office that takes calls for service, such as the Police Communications Center or the Citizen Service Office can tell you there are some people who call often, but rarely have real and founded concerns about the behavior or property maintenance practices of their neighbors. One such case is *Dirty Dealing*, where a mentally ill

Case Study: Cultural Conflict

- Rental Duplex Built in 1883.
- MV: \$42,100; MV per unit: \$21,050.
- City Taxes: \$249
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$7,709
- Problems: Poor Management, Exterior Violations, Large Outdoor Parties, Cultural Differences.

“Cultural Conflict” is a very old duplex in a highly visible location on a major thoroughfare. Because of its age and condition, it may very well have the lowest value of any duplex in the City. This rental property is owned “contract for deed” and has been a chronic problem for many years.

The physical condition of the building is not good. The exterior has been the source of problems with tall weeds, broken windows and screens. Code Enforcement has received six complaint calls about this property within the two years studied. We know nothing about the interior of the building as no City inspectors have been inside. Gaining access to the interior of rental duplexes is possible under the City’s rental registration program. However, this property was not registered during the study period.

The Fire Department has also had an extraordinary level of activity with this address with three fire runs and eight emergency medical runs during the two years it was under study. The Police have been called to this address 73 times in the same time period. This is an extraordinary level of service needed for a two-unit building. The police calls are, however, primarily for nuisance violations, mostly noise. While some neighbors and City staff suspect the residents of drug dealing, there have been no arrests for drug offenses and no FORCE unit activity at this address. Violations are primarily noise and disturbances along with a few

calls for domestic assaults, fights and assaults. The responding police officers have written few actual reports except one major disturbance, which some called a semi-riot. The usual police response to calls at this address is to “advise.” There is no particular pattern to the police calls other than they occur on a regular basis. Police calls in 2001 look much like previous years, although there was one reported arson following our study.

This property is a neighborhood nightmare. The owner does not screen tenants and has little concern for what goes on at the property. This is compounded by cultural and race-based conflicts between the white neighbors and the black tenants. The tenants see no problem with moving their furniture and partying in the front yard and sometimes the street. In one instance, couches were placed on the sidewalk as part of an outdoor party. This party ended in four arrests.

Several staff have described this type of situation as the frontyard/backyard syndrome where neighbors are O.K. with an outdoor party and drinking, as long as it take place in the backyard. Neighbors disapprove of parties and drinking on the front porch and in the front yard where people from inner-cities have more traditionally congregated. Some neighbors have pledged themselves to drive these “undesirables” out of the neighborhood and call the police at every opportunity. There seems to be a racist element to the conflict at this property. They have even called the police because some tenants’ children were playing jump rope in the street. There is an old lady next door who calls the police upon any provocation. Sometimes the police find a basis for her reports, sometimes not.

The mix of an uncooperative landlord, semi-incompetent and culturally different tenants and picky neighbors generates enduring problems. There is some indication the landlord has recently begun to do some tenant screening and is beginning to learn the business. This may begin to break the cycle of bad tenants being replaced with bad tenants. However, the property and

woman lives next door to a chronic problem property and frequently calls the City about her concerns. Her complaints were founded from time to time, but by and large, they were not.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM ANYWAY?

So just what is it about these properties that makes people worry? They do not usually look as good as their neighbors, but a lot of properties are like that. The answer is that chronic problem properties scare us. They scare us not just because of the crime which is too often present, but also because of their chaos. Someone intimately involved with the property is either unwilling or unable to fix the problems there. This is why their impact goes so far beyond the boundaries of their yards. In order to explore the chronic problems at these properties and why they are so harmful, we will first look to experts and their theories; and then move on to what we have learned at a property-specific level.

What the Experts Think

In the course of doing a comprehensive literature review, we discovered a great deal of work by researchers to determine the affect problem properties have on urban decline, housing markets and crime rates. Although, most of the literature does not specifically attempt to explain the origins of chronic problem properties, much of the research provides information on why chronic problems properties are important to study.

Broken Windows, Incivility and Disorder

The notion that physical disorder and crime, particularly petty crime, have a negative impact on housing values, increase resident fears of crime and cause increase in future crime, has been developed by a number of prominent urban sociologists and criminal justice scholars over the last two decades. These thinkers have developed a close-knit family of theories linking these property-associated disorders with crime changes and neighborhood decline. These theories, termed broadly as "incivilities theory," have changed the philosophy of policing in a number of police departments. They also provided municipalities with an important justification why close attention should be paid to the blight and crime associated with chronic problem properties, similar to ones in this study. Incivilities, also known as disorders, are defined by researchers as social and physical conditions in a neighborhood that are viewed as troublesome and potentially threatening by its residents and users of public spaces. Social incivilities include such activities as prostitution, drug-dealing, and loitering. Physical incivilities would include such things as broken windows, junk cars, and garbage houses. Table 11 has lists of both social and physical incivilities.

In developing strategies to deal with the issue of neighborhood decline and incivilities, social scientists in the last 20 years have found evidence that correcting physical and social problems associated with properties is one of the most fundamental things that must be done to improve urban neighborhoods. Michael Greenberg, in the article *Improving Neighborhood Quality: A Hierarchy of Needs*, found City residents believe neighborhoods will only improve if crime and physical blight are controlled. In a survey of 306 New Jersey residents, respondents stated the absence of crime and decay is required for neighborhood to be considered excellent. These two factors were far more important than others, such as quality of public services, recreational opportunities, and improving schools, in shaping residents' opinions about livability and neighborhood quality.

Case Study: Down ‘n Out

- 20 Unit Rental Built in 1867.
- MV: \$121,300; MV per Unit: \$6,065.
- City Taxes: \$440
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$11,017
- Problems: Tenant Behavioral Problems, Drinking, Disorderly Boys, Intolerant Neighbors.

“Down ‘n Out” is a large, old mansion converted into 20 single resident units. It is next door to another case study, the “Nasty Four,” in an historic preservation district. The current owner has had the property for 20 years. Most of the residents are on some form of public assistance. The building itself is very depressing and has been described as “a halfway house for people on their way into an institution, rather than on the way out of one.”

Not surprising, there are continuing behavioral problems. There is lots of drinking, drug use and low-level criminal activity. During the study period, the police have been called to this address 90 times. Forty of these calls have been to the general areas of the building and 50 have been to specific units. The incidents have included public drinking, narcotics, disorderly boys, domestic assault, fights, theft, aggravated assault, vandalism, burglary and arson. The calls to the general areas of the building have involved narcotics, disorderly boys, domestic assault, fights, assault, “drunk” and burglary. The calls to individual units have been primarily domestic assault and are rather evenly spread over time and units, so there does not seem to be a small number of problem people or units causing the calls to the building. The number of domestic assaults, disorderly boys and family/children calls is puzzling for a single occupancy

rooming house. These calls likely stem from issues related to overcrowding in individual units, among other problems.*

In recent years, physical maintenance of the building has not been a significant problem. While correction orders have been issued for both interior and exterior violations, the owner has taken care of all of them promptly. Exterior orders have been issued for paint, siding, trim, doors, stairs, windows and screens. Interior orders have been issued for rodents, insects, garbage buildup in a unit, water damage, stairs, holes in walls, smoke detectors and a bathroom sink. None of these problems have been particularly serious and all have been resolved quickly. In essence, there are no enduring Code Enforcement problems.

The basic problem with this property is that the neighbors do not want this kind of use in their neighborhood. They consider most of the occupants to be undesirables and wish they would go somewhere else to live. They would prefer to see this building used as housing for students rather than for “down ‘n outers.” This preference is reinforced by a history of more serious behavioral and maintenance problems. There were, for example, FORCE raids conducted at this property in both 1997 and 1998 and, although there have been none recently, neighbors have a long memory. Although the owner has become much more responsible and effective in recent years, the neighbors still see this as something they do not want in their neighborhood. This is reflected in what is probably an urban myth about drunks at this building trying to lure young children onto the property. It is a locally unwanted land use (lulu), which also begs the question, “where are these people to live, if not here?” Finally, all of the problems this property faces are not helped by the fact that the “Nasty Four” is their next door neighbor, and both are widely considered to be pulling the neighborhood down.

Table 11. Examples of Physical and Social Incivilities

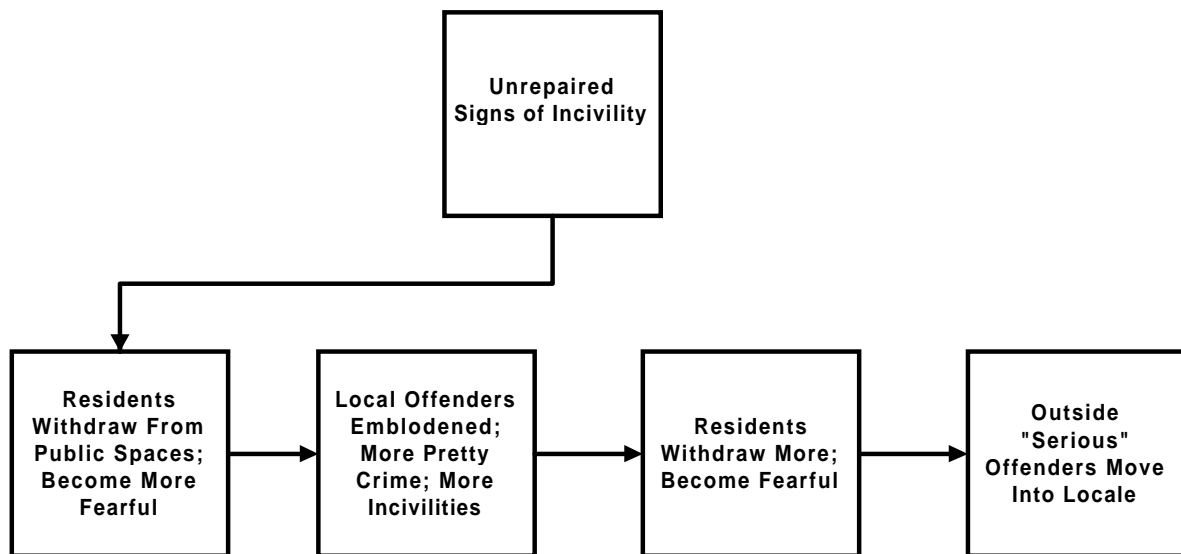
<i>Physical Incivilities</i>		
Broken Windows	Garbage/Trash/Litter	Dumping
Boarded Vacant Buildings	Tall Grass/Weeds Grown-up	Noise
Vacant Buildings	Junk Cars (<i>Private Property</i>)	Porno Theaters
Abandoned Buildings	Vandalism	Bars
Dilapidated Buildings	Abandoned Vehicles (<i>Public Property</i>)	Graffiti
<i>Social Incivilities</i>		
Prostitution	Sexual Harassment on the Street	Robbery
Public Drinking	Domestic Disputes that Spill into Public Space	Loitering
Unpredictable People	Public Insults	Gunfire
Panhandlers	Vagrancy	Weapons
Mentally Disturbed	Drug Dealing (<i>Open Air and Drug Houses</i>)	Curfew Violations
Harassment/Haranguing	Auto Theft	Street Dog Fighting
School Disruption	Arguing/Fighting Among Neighbors	Truancy
Gang Violence	Lack of Traffic Enforcement	Gambling
Rowdy Teens (Feral Youth)		

Since chronic problem properties are the source of a disproportionate amount of crime, physical and social problems, Greenberg's findings suggest that cities should prioritize neighborhood redevelopment efforts to address blight and crime at these properties, before investing time and resources into other neighborhood redevelopment efforts.

William Q. Wilson and George Kelling in a seminal article published in *Harpers Magazine*, entitled *Broken Windows*, outlined a thesis which states physical incivilities, are in and of themselves, catalysts for neighborhood decline. How physical disorder lead to this decline, in Wilson and Kelling's broken windows theory, is a multi-step process. The casual model of their thesis is graphical displayed in Diagram G.

The first step in the sequence is the existence of a sign of incivility, such as graffiti or a broken window. It is not important per se that the window is broken. Windows are always getting broken, properties are always deteriorating and some homes are always being abandoned. More important is how long the broken window or other problems remain uncorrected. If the condition is not repaired in a short time, Wilson and Kelling theorize residents will infer that resident-based controls are weak and other residents do not care about what is happening in their neighborhood. When this occurs residents will presume the neighborhood is socially disorganized, which will subsequently lead residents to become increasingly reluctant to use public spaces or to intervene in disorderly situations. With this withdrawal from the public realm, social and governmental controls weaken and residents become increasingly concerned for their safety.

At the same time, local petty criminals, such as graffiti artists or "taggers" and disorderly teenagers will become emboldened, causing further resident concern and withdrawal. For local petty criminals and at-risk youth, persistent physical disorder symbolizes opportunities for delinquency. After a long period of time, physical incivilities and delinquency will become ingrained in the neighborhood's environment and serious criminals from outside the area will become aware of the neighborhood's deteriorating conditions. These criminals will take opportunities to victimize others because they will perceive their risk of detection or apprehension to be much lower than in other neighborhoods. If the offender motivation is high enough and there are sufficient targets available, they will move into the neighborhood and commit street crimes.

Diagram G. Wilson and Kelling's (1982) Incivilities Theory¹¹

Wilson and Kelling provide a strong rationale for why cities should address chronic problem properties and the social disorder they create. The policy recommendations they put forth to prevent or correct this decline focus mainly on encouraging cities to concentrate on enforcement activities on maintaining both physical and social order. In their article, the authors argue that after World War II, Police Departments moved away from maintaining order to devote most of their energy to fighting and solving serious crime. Instead, police and other City enforcement agencies, should spend more time working with residents to correct incivilities by performing such duties as moving rowdy groups out the area and notifying agencies so that landlords are cited for needed repairs or trashed-filled lots are cleaned. Much of the community policing movement of the last 20 years incorporates the essence of the Wilson and Kelling's theory and was the intellectual inspiration for the zero-tolerance approaches undertaken by many cities, such as New York City, which attempt to reduce crime through eradicating disorder.

Differing Impact Depending on Neighborhood Stability

Kelling and Wilson also discuss in great detail how enforcement activities should be deployed in City neighborhoods. They roughly separate a community into three different types of neighborhoods: stable neighborhoods with a secure population and healthy housing values; neighborhoods that have deteriorated and have experienced prolonged declines in housing values, have a transient population and have experienced a history of incivilities; and neighborhoods in transition which have been stable but are threatened by an uncertain future. Wilson and Kelling suggest this last group of borderline neighborhoods is where incivilities will have the strongest impacts on crime, behavioral and emotional outcomes. Incivilities, have little impact in stable neighborhoods because they are either resolved quickly or residents are confident enough in their neighborhood not to perceive incivilities as a threat. In declining neighborhoods, incivilities have little impact as well, because a relatively large number of incivilities already exist in the community so additional ones have a diminishing impact. Therefore, it is the borderline neighborhoods in

¹¹Ralph B. Taylor. "The Incivilities Thesis: Theory, Measurement, and Policy." *Measuring What Matters: Proceedings From the Policing Institute Meetings*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, July 1999.

which remediation efforts should be focused. A number of researchers have followed up on this thesis and have found that, indeed, municipalities achieve the biggest return from dollars invested on reducing incivilities when they focus on borderline neighborhoods.¹²

Neighborhood Cohesion and Collective Efficacy

Since its initial publication, Kelling and Wilson's theory has generated a tremendous amount of controversy. Critics of the theory have argued repeatedly that, while the phenomena appear to be related, there is little evidence that disorder directly promotes serious crime. For instance, Robert Sampson and Stephen W. Raudenbush have noted that homicide, arguably one of the better measures of violence, was among the number of offenses which they studied for which there was not direct relationship with disorder. Unlike Kelling and Wilson, they believe physical disorder, such as the broken window, is just a proxy for the real causes of decline; namely concentrated poverty and the lack of community cohesion and involvement.¹³ This lack of social cohesion and involvement, Sampson and Raudenbush have termed, collective efficacy. They believe by strengthening collective efficacy, neighborhoods can be stabilized and crime reduced.

A number of scholars believe collective efficacy is important element in any discussion of incivilities theory. Not only may strengthening community cohesion and involvement be an important factor in combating disorder, disorder may have a negative effect on efforts to build collective efficacy. As Wilson and Kelling have suggested, disorder leads residents to withdraw from the public sphere. This withdrawal has the potential to cause them to cease organizing and participating in activities which would improve collective efficacy.

Researchers have also found that the presence of incivilities limits the development of social capital.¹⁴ Social capital is defined as the level of civic engagement, the mutual trust between residents and the strength of community institutions through which civic interaction takes place. Physical disorder has also been found to increase the resident's mistrust of local officials and potential investors who are interested in neighborhood redevelopment.¹⁵ It is clear to us from our research that chronic problem properties and the disorder associated with them can have profound effects on the neighborhoods and residents. As we have discussed the problems associated with chronic problem properties can be linked with increased crime and fear of crime.

¹² Rolf Goetze and Kent W. Colton. "The Dynamics of Neighborhoods: A Fresh Approach to Understanding Housing and Neighborhood Change." *Neighborhood Policy and Planning*, eds Phillip L. Clay and Robert M. Hollister. Lexington, KY: Lexington Books, 1983, p. 65.

¹³ Robert J. Sampson and Stephen W. Raudenbush. *Disorder in Urban Neighborhoods—Does It Lead to Crime?* *National Institute of Justice, Research in Brief*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, February 2001.

¹⁴ Kenneth Temkin and William M. Rohe. "Social Capital and Neighborhood Stability: An Empirical Investigation." *Housing Policy Debate*. Volume 9, Issue 1, p 65.

¹⁵ Michael Greenberg. "Improving Neighborhood Quality: A Hierarchy of Needs." *Housing Policy Debate*. Volume 10, Issue 3, p. 620.

WHAT THE CASE STUDIES TELL US ABOUT CONDITIONS

We are in a unique position at this point to delve into how these theories play themselves out in our case studies and how they led to the conditions at these chronic problem properties. In order to do this, we will first examine some of our interviewees “ratings” of the conditions. We will then discuss the specifics of how these properties differ from their neighbors, by looking at both their interior and exterior code violations, and then the criminal activity that occurs there.

Ratings

The case studies have many references about how these properties do not meet community standards. Many of these observations come from a review of official records, such as inspection and police reports. While these sources give us specific information about the violation of codes and laws, they do not necessarily capture how these properties compare to their immediate neighbors. In the research process, we conducted a large number of interviews—many with community organizers and elected officials. The many stories we heard—and verified to the best of our ability—gave color and context to the official file information we reviewed. In order to get a more precise sense of these people’s feelings about the individual properties, we asked them to rate the properties in their area on a scale of one to ten (with one being the worst and ten the best) their perceptions of the housing conditions and sense of property and personal safety. We then asked them to rate the same things for the one-block area surrounding the property. The averages of these ratings appear in Table 12. In all cases, we found that the properties were perceived to be worse than their surrounding neighbors.

Table 12. Interview Ratings of Chronic Problem Property Housing and Safety Conditions

Property Ratings	Residential			Average
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Housing Conditions of Neighborhood	5.8	5.0	3.9	5.3
Housing Conditions of Property	4.2	3.4	2.1	3.7
Personal Safety in Neighborhood ²	5.9	5.0	3.7	5.3
Personal Safety at/in Property	3.7	3.7	2.3	3.5
Property Safety in Neighborhood ²	5.3	4.4	3.6	5.0
Property Safety at/in Property	4.1	2.9	2.5	3.6

Housing Conditions

The housing conditions for the area surrounding our chronic problem properties were rated an average of 5.3 on our one to ten scale, while the same rating for our case studies was 3.7. The building conditions of commercial case studies received the worst ratings as a category of properties with an average of 2.1. Interestingly, the starkest differences between case studies and neighborhood were observed for owner-occupied properties, where the immediate area received an average rating of 6.7, but the studies were rated 4.4. Another big discrepancy can be observed in

the case of buildings which are over 100 years old. In this case, the immediate area received an average rating of 5.6, but the studies were rated 3.2.

Property Safety

Perceptions of property safety for the area surrounding our chronic problem properties were rated an average of 5.0 on our one to ten scale, while the same rating for our case studies was 3.6. In the case of property safety, both commercial and residential properties with three or more units received poor ratings in our case studies with 2.5 and 2.9 respectively. The biggest differences between neighborhood and case studies was again observed with owner-occupied case studies (4.5) compared to their neighborhoods (6.6). A big difference was also seen between multi-unit residential case studies (2.9) and their immediate neighborhoods (4.4).

Personal Safety

The final category we asked our interviewees to rate was their sense of personal safety at these chronic problem properties and in the surrounding area. In this case, the average rating for a chronic problem property was 3.5, while the surrounding area was rated 5.3. Commercial buildings received the lowest ratings with 2.3. The next lowest ratings were for our chronic problem properties which were more than 100 years old.

Exterior Conditions

In the earlier discussion of signs of disorder and incivility, the exterior conditions of chronic problem properties were highlighted. Of those signs of disorder that occur on private property, all were reported in some aspect of our case studies, except porno theaters. This is reflected in Tables 13 and 14, as well as in the case studies themselves.

Physical Signs of Incivility		
Broken Windows	Garbage/Trash/Litter	Dumping
Boarded Vacant Buildings	Tall Grass/Weeds Grown-up	Noise
Vacant Buildings	Junk Cars (<i>Private Property</i>)	Porno Theaters
Abandoned Buildings	Vandalism	Bars
Dilapidated Buildings	Abandoned Vehicles (<i>Public Property</i>)	Graffiti

Because our research involved looking at Code Enforcement records in-depth, we have identified those aspects of the case studies exterior conditions that would qualify them as dilapidated buildings. "Broken Windows" and torn screens were the most common structural problems observed by inspectors at a rate of 44 percent for all of our case studies. In addition to broken windows, the presence and condition of doors, siding, paint, and the roof all contribute to these properties' lack of "curb appeal."

Case Study: Fear Factor

- Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1909.
- MV: \$53,100.
- City Taxes: \$193
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$1,289
- Garbage, drugs, intimidation.

“Fear Factor” is an older single-family dwelling in the middle of the block in a troubled neighborhood. This home was owned for many years by an angry, belligerent old man with a serious drinking problem. He was known to yell at and berate his neighbors often. In recent years, two grandsons have lived with him. The grandfather died during our study period and the property seems to have been taken over by the grandsons. The house seems to be deteriorating even more rapidly under their control. The neighborhood is not helped by that fact that the house next door (Career Criminals in this study) is also a chronic problem property.

The City has never conducted an inspection of the interior of this house. However, the exterior has been a problem. In 1999 and 2000, the City has needed to conduct three summary abatements for garbage, wood, tall weeds, appliances and rubble. The crumbling

retaining wall has also been a problem for years.

The Police have been called to this address on 13 occasions during the study period. These calls have involved theft, narcotics, weapons, disorderly boys, domestic assault, assault and vandalism. Interestingly, no reports have been written in response to any of these calls.* Despite the fact that neighbors believe the grandsons are involved in drugs, there is no FORCE file for this property. The reason may be that drugs are stored, but not sold, here. The grandsons who live here reportedly work in partnership with other nearby houses where they sell the drugs stored at Fear Factor. They also sell drugs from this property on the street. Neighbors report a lot a night time activity at this address; however, it does not seem to involve individual customers for illegal drugs, but rather street-level dealers coming to restock their “merchandise”.

The occupants of this house create a great deal of fear in the neighborhood. They have reportedly been threatening toward neighbors, and those who have called the police speak of being subject to retaliation. These threatening behaviors and criminal activities, together with the very poor relationship the older man had with his neighbors, have worked to alienate the neighbors and prevent them from taking action to reclaim their safety and sense of community.

* Following our study period, police were called to this property 14 times in 2001. Five of these incidents resulted in

Table 13. Exterior Structural Problems

Code Violation	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Windows/Screens	9 (47.4%)	5 (55.6%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (43.8%)
Door Locks: broken/missing	5 (26.3%)	5 (55.6%)	1 (25.0%)	11 (34.4%)
Paint: bad condition	3 (5.3%)	7 (77.8%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (31.3%)
Siding: bad condition	4 (21.1%)	4 (44.4%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (25.0%)
Roof/Fascia/Soffits: holes/leaking	2 (10.5%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (50.0%)	6 (18.8%)
Outbuildings: poor condition	5 (26.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	6 (18.8%)
Walls: holes, bad condition	1 (5.3%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (25.0%)	4 (12.5%)
Stair Condition	1 (5.3%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.3%)
<i>Exterior Structural Problems Total</i>	14 (73.7%)	9 (100.0%)	2 (50.0%)	25 (78.1%)

Table 14. Garbage/Yard Exterior Problems

Code Violation	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Garbage/Trash Buildup	14 (73.7%)	4 (44.4%)	2 (50.0%)	20 (62.5%)
Junk Vehicle	8 (42.1%)	4 (44.4%)	2 (50.0%)	14 (43.8%)
Tall Grass and Weeds	10 (52.6%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (25.0%)	13 (40.6%)
Furniture	8 (42.1%)	3 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (34.4%)
Mattresses	6 (31.6%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (25.0%)
Appliances	5 (26.3%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (18.8%)
<i>Garbage/Yard Total</i>	18 (94.7%)	5 (55.6%)	4 (100.0%)	27 (84.4%)

The other major category of exterior code violations we tracked had nothing to do with the buildings' structural character, but rather with the yard or surroundings of the properties. Here the most common problem was an inordinate build-up of household garbage and trash. Given that the City has private, rather than public provision of these services, this situation is not altogether surprising. In many of these chronic problem properties, the relevant actors are either unable or unwilling to maintain this service. Related to the accumulation of regular household garbage, there were also relatively high levels of junk furniture, mattresses and appliances on these properties. In total, 84 percent of our case studies had some kind of garbage or yard exterior code violation during our study period.

Case Study: Weird Neighbor

- Owner Occupied Single Family Built in 1920.
- MV: \$101,800.
- City Taxes: \$395
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$2,210
- Problems: Long Term Incomplete Exterior Project, Commercial Vehicle Storage.

“Weird Neighbor” is a single family home in a pleasant neighborhood. The owner is described variously as eccentric and arrogant and is reportedly difficult for both neighbors and City inspectors. At least one seasoned City inspector is unwilling to go to the property alone because of the strange and intimidating behavior of the owner. The owner is considered by many to be highly intelligent but mentally ill. His mental illness is sufficiently debilitating so he is unable to work.

The issues at this property revolve around the owners inability, or unwillingness, to maintain the exterior of the property, the keeping of a commercial truck and a dog. The neighbors have been complaining for years about a never-ending home maintenance project. Scaffolding was put up years ago to repair and paint the exterior of the building. Little, if any, home repairs have actually occurred. The neighbors have complained to the City and inspectors have issued

orders to repair the exterior of the building. These orders have been to little effect. The owner was tagged and was ordered in January 2000 to complete the repairs by June 2000. He was tagged again and failed to appear at the most recent court date.

For a few months, a dog also caused a great deal of concern. During that time Animal Control was called seven times for the dog running loose. Citations were issued on two occasions and the owner was also ordered to clean up animal litter. The dog problems ended after this flurry of activity.

A large commercial truck was also being kept on the property much to the displeasure of the neighbors. The City attempted to deal with this situation by ordering it removed based on zoning laws that prohibit the keeping of commercial vehicles within residential districts. The matter went to court and the judge ruled in the owners favor because the truck was not being used for commercial purposes. The City has since revised the City Codes to prohibit this type of storage of commercial vehicles.

There is considerable difference of opinion regarding this situation. Some see the owner as a difficult, arrogant and possibly dangerous individual who enjoys aggravating his neighbors and City inspectors. Others see this as an unfortunate situation where his neighbors are harassing a man with an illness. In the time that has passed following the completion of the study period, the owner's son has taken over the property. Much to the dismay of neighbors, similar problems are

Interior Conditions

The interior conditions of these properties is more difficult to assess than that of the exterior for two reasons. The first is self-evident. There are simply not as many people who see, and therefore can report on, the interiors of buildings. The second is the City does not have a periodic-systematic inspection process for one- and two-unit dwellings. Rather, the City uses complaint-based Code Enforcement.¹⁶ Therefore, the violations reported in Tables 15, 16 and 17 very likely under-represent the true level of interior code violations in one- and two-unit dwellings. We found that 100 percent of the buildings covered by the City's Certificate of Occupancy program had some type of interior code violation, while the comparable figure for one- and two-unit dwellings was 63 percent. This is generally inconsistent with the level and type of interventions required by inspectors at these properties. For example, the level of correction orders, abatements and citations are similar between these two types of property. This is discussed in the next chapter, *Dealing with the Problems*.

The most common structural problems noted for the interiors of our case studies were floor coverings, such as carpeting or linoleum being excessively worn, filthy or missing. Other relatively common interior structural code violations included doors which were missing or in bad condition, holes in walls and water damage.

Table 15. Interior Structural Problems

Code Violation	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Other (Often Floor Coverings)	4 (21.1%)	8 (88.9%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (37.5%)
Doors: Missing, Bad Condition	1 (5.3%)	6 (66.7%)	2 (50.0%)	9 (28.1%)
Holes in Walls	1 (15.8%)	6 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (21.9%)
Water Damage	3 (15.8%)	4 (44.4%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (21.9%)
Stairs: Broken, Bad Condition	1 (10.5%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (9.4%)
Interior Structural Problems Total	7 (36.8%)	9 (100.0%)	3 (75.0%)	19 (59.4%)

The same proportion of our properties experienced interior systems or utilities problems, as experienced interior structural problems, in both cases 59 percent. The most common system or utility problem had to do with furnaces and lack of heat, although this was much more common in the multi-unit residential and commercial properties we studied, than in one- and two-unit residential properties. This is likely due to the fact that we do not have periodic-systematic inspection for one- and two- unit rental properties. Another reason could be that one- and two- unit properties are much more likely to be owner-occupied, thus not warranting complaints to the City. Water shut-offs, on the other hand, occurred almost exclusively with one- and two-unit residential properties, where one in five had this occur during our study period. Electricity shut-offs occurred in one-fourth of our case studies. Only occasionally was the refrigerator, water heater or stove cited as problematic.

¹⁶ *Complaint-Based Enforcement* is a method of ensuring property, housing, health and building codes are followed throughout the community by responding to specific complaints or concerns citizens or others informed inspection officials about. Complaint-based Code Enforcement – This is considered one of the three basic approaches to ensuring codes are observed in the community. Periodic-systematic inspection is the method where buildings and conditions are comprehensively reviewed on a regular basis. The third approach is a blend of these two, where there are periodic systematic inspections, but inspectors are also sent out to handle specific complaints and concerns as they arise.

Case Study: Old and Ugly

- 4 Unit Rental Built in 1888.
- MV: \$54,000; MV per Unit: \$13,500.
- City Taxes: \$470
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$9,575
- Problems: Absent Landlord, Drugs, Interior and Exterior Violations, TRA.

“Old and Ugly” is a four-plex that may be the ugliest building in Saint Paul and is also among the oldest. It is a large and decrepit building that is visually unattractive and painted an ugly color. Unfortunately, it is also in a prominent location making it even more offensive to the neighborhood. This neighborhood, a mix of residential and commercial, is already in distress and is just beginning a revitalization process. “Old and Ugly” has a history of serious problems and is seen to be a huge problem for the area.

Both the interior and the exterior of the building have experienced major problems. Within the studied two years alone, there have been three summary abatement orders, two correction orders, four Certificate of Occupancy revocations and a condemnation. The interior violations have involved appliances, rodents, insects, water damage, doors, gas and electric service along with torn and unsanitary carpets. Exterior violations have included paint, siding, trim, doors, locks, windows, screens, sidewalk garbage, abandoned vehicles, furniture and mattresses. Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS) helped initiate a Tenant Remedy Action (TRA) on behalf of the tenants and the court appointed an administrator for the property. The tenants, however, did not make rent payments to the administrator and the property is now in receivership and the needed repairs have gone

undone. Not surprisingly, the property taxes are also delinquent.

The level of criminal activity here has been very high for years. During our two year study period, the police responded to 55 calls involving child abuse/neglect, domestic assaults, fights, theft assault and narcotics. The FORCE unit has been active at this property having conducted “knock & talks” and executed a search warrant that yielded a large amount of illegal drugs. Besides these official actions, the police believe tenants’ teen children were involved in “jumping” a local homeless man. There have been problems with pit bulls and partying on the front porch, among many other nuisance activities. Taken as a whole, this building is just a bad scene. It is eye-sore and a dangerous building occupied by a criminal element and their children. Because of their behavior, and possibly also because of their race, they are not welcome in the neighborhood. The local neighborhood development corporation has considered buying the building for either rehabilitation or demolition. However, repairs would be too expensive, as would paying for the cost to relocate the current tenants so the building could be demolished.

The owner is inexperienced and in “over-his-head” with this building. His attempts to manage this building has been an abysmal failure. He has been totally ineffective in dealing with the property and his tenants. He did not even evict the tenant who was the source of the drugs found by the police in a drug raid. The owner claims to be recovering from an injury and unable to handle the property. He just seems to just want out from under this building and has recently disappeared and cannot be found. While his disappearance may be a good thing in the long run, it makes the resolution of the problems at this property, in the near term, almost impossible.

As a post script, this property became a registered vacant building in August of 2001. At that time, calls for police

Table 16. Interior Systems and Utilities Problems

Code Violation	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Heat/Furnace	2 (10.5%)	4 (44.4%)	2 (50.0%)	8 (25.0%)
Electricity	4 (21.1%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (25.0%)	8 (25.0%)
Water Shutoff/Malfunction	4 (21.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	5 (15.6%)
Gas	1 (15.8%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.3%)
Refrigerator	1 (15.8%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.3%)
Water Heater	0 (0.0%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.1%)
Stove	1 (15.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.1%)
Interior Systems Problems Total	8 (42.1%)	9 (100.0%)	2 (50.0%)	19 (59.4%)

Approximately forty percent of our properties experienced some type of health-related code violation. Both rodent or insect infestation and garbage build-up inside of the house or building occurred in one in five of our case studies. Overcrowding was cited only in five of the thirteen case properties covered by the City's Certificate of Occupancy program.

Table 17. Interior Public Health Problems

Code Violation	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Rodents/Insect Infestation	1 (5.6%)	6 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (21.9%)
Garbage Build-up	3 (15.8%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (50.0%)	7 (21.9%)
Overcrowding	0 (0.0%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (25.0%)	5 (15.6%)
Smoke Detectors: missing/malfunctioning	2 (10.5%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (12.5%)
Public Health Problems Total	3 (15.8%)	7 (77.8%)	3 (75.0%)	13 (40.6%)

Case Study: Empty Promise

- Owner Occupied Duplex Built in 1889.
- MV: \$53,900, MV per Unit: \$26,950.
- City Taxes: \$319
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$8,062
- Problems: Code Violations, Vacant Building, Drug Sales/Use, Squatting.

“Empty Promise” is an old upper-lower duplex near I-94 in a historic area. This duplex has been vacant since March 2000 when the City condemned and ordered it vacant. Prior to that, the house was owner occupied. For a short while, after it was vacated, it was illegally occupied by squatters who used this as a home and base for selling crack and methamphetamine. This building is in bad condition and is considered a blight on the neighborhood. The owner, reported by neighbors to be a “hop-head” has admitted to selling crack and is otherwise seen as an oddball. He rented the other unit to friends who were similarly afflicted. He was in the process of buying this duplex on a contract for deed from a man who owns one of the other cases in this study. So it seems that getting the owner occupant out of the building through the condemnation helped, but did not entirely solve the problems. The property has been a problem for a long time with code violations and high levels of criminal activity going back many years. This remains, as characterized by one inspector, a filthy and worn-out building.

Maintenance of this building during our study— and clearly a long time before that— has been disgraceful. The water, gas and electric have all been shut-off at one time or another during 1999 and 2000. Occupants have thrown everything imaginable in the yard resulting in eight summary or vehicle abatement orders

during the study period. The City has written five Code Enforcement tags during this time. The first three tags were disposed of by the court with a \$200 fine with an additional \$700 suspended if there were no further same or similar violations. The final two tags were disposed of by the court with more \$200 fines and suspended \$700 fines. There is no indication, however, the initial \$700 fine suspended was imposed, although the court disposed of two more “same or similar” violations within only a month. It would appear the court was “only kidding” about that part of the initial sentence.

The police have also been busy at this building. They responded to calls for police assistance at this address 72 times in only two years. These calls involved many narcotics matters along with a dose of domestic assaults and other crimes such as theft, fraud and auto theft. The police sent “excessive consumption of police services letters” and conducted “knock & talks” at this address. Animal Control was frequently called to this property during 1999 to deal with dog problems.

In summary, this property was owned by a well-known slum lord who sold it to a drug addict on a contract for deed— possibly in the expectation he would get the property back when the buyer failed to meet the terms of the contract for deed. Not surprising, the property immediately became a crime scene and a blight on the neighborhood. Also, to no one’s surprise, taxes were not been paid on this property since 1998 and throughout our study period. Like several other of our case studies, this property became vacant at the end of a downward cycle of police and code problems which ended in the duplex being used as a drug house. The City attempted to intervene, but received only tepid support from the housing court. Finally, the City did succeed in getting the property condemned and vacated which helped until squatters moved in and began

Crime

In the beginning, when we were endeavored to study chronic problem properties, we thought the majority of problems we would encounter would be exterior code violations. These are the things people see and they often come to mind first when thinking about particular properties. However, while broken windows occurred at 44 percent of our properties and there was a build-up of household garbage at 63 percent, various types of crimes occurred even more frequently. For example, disorderly boys¹⁷ were reported at 66 percent of the case studies, domestic violence was reported at 88 percent of the properties and vandalism at 56 percent. While we certainly expected some crime, the level and depth of the problems was one of our more profound findings.

In the earlier discussion of signs of disorder and incivility, the following types of behaviors and crimes were highlighted. Of those signs of disorder that occur on private property, almost all were reported in some aspect of our case studies, except pan handling and vagrancy. This is reflected in Tables 18, 19 and 20, as well as in the case studies themselves. Notably, although a few of these are violent in nature, they are, for the most part, nuisance crimes.

Social Signs of Incivility		
Prostitution	Sexual Harassment on the Street	Vagrancy
Public Drinking	Domestic Disputes that Spill into Public Space	Robbery
Unpredictable People	Public Insults	Loitering
Panhandlers	Drug Dealing (<i>Open Air and Drug Houses</i>)	Gunfire
Mentally Disturbed	Auto Theft	Weapons
Harassment/Haranguing	Arguing/Fighting Among Neighbors	Curfew Violations
School Disruption	Lack of Traffic Enforcement	Street Dog Fighting
Gang Violence		Truancy
Rowdy Teens/Feral Youth —	<i>also known as disorderly boys by the St. Paul Police</i>	Gambling

Nuisance Crime

Nuisance crime, which is sometimes referred to as “quality of life” crime includes a wide variety of actions which are against the law. For purposes of our study, they are also those crimes which do not fit neatly into the categories of violent or property crime. Several types of nuisance crime were found in our case studies: disorderly boys (66%), narcotics/drug dealing and use (59%) and disturbances (56%), public drinking (38%). Prostitution was an issue in about one-fifth of our case studies. Interestingly, several types of nuisance crime occurred almost exclusively at one- and two-unit residents, including loud music, haranguing of passers-by, barking dogs and dog fighting. At the same time, reported disturbances seemed to be more of an issue for multi-unit residential buildings.

¹⁷ Disorderly boys is a term used in the Police Department’s call management system which refers to rowdy and/or disorderly youth.

Case Study: Dirty Dealing

- Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1887.
- MV: \$56,000.
- City Taxes: \$221
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$13,131
- Problems: Gross Unsanitary Conditions, Occasionally Vacant, Criminal Nuisances, Racist Neighbors.

“Dirty Dealing” is an older single family rental house. It has been vacant for much of the time in recent years. It was vacant from 1995 to 1998 and became vacant again when condemned for lack of water and sanitation in June 2000. Ownership of the property has been unstable to say the least. It was sold in 1992, 1993, 1994, 1997 and again in 1999. The current owner was selling it on a contract for deed when it was most recently condemned. Interestingly, the last tenant somehow believed she was buying the home, on contract for deed, from the preceding contract for deed buyer. Neither the contract for deed buyer, nor the tenant, are currently in the ownership picture with the property having reverted to the recorded owner. The most recent tenant was a mother and her two teenage daughters. The mother is a suspected prostitute who brought drug users and sellers into the home on a regular basis.

Maintenance of the property has been abysmal, and problems with garbage build-up and sanitation have plagued its interior. FORCE unit officers indicated in interviews that conditions in the house were some of the worse they had seen—unattended children were left in filth, including dog feces, with little or no food in the house. City officials issued six summary abatements, three correction orders and two citations in the months proceeding the condemnation for lack of

water and gross unsanitary conditions. The exterior of the property has had garbage, mattresses, furniture and appliances causing numerous code violations. The City also charged/billed the occupants for excessive use of Code Enforcement services.

The police have also been busy at this property. During our study period, the police were called to this address 150 times, in spite of the property being officially vacant for six months of this period. There was no significant criminal activity in 2001 and very few calls for police service. For a single family dwelling, this high call level during our study period is a little short of astonishing. It means, for example, the police came to this home an average of twice each week the eighteen months it was occupied. Police responded to calls involving noise, vandalism, detox, narcotics, burglary, domestic violence, fights, dangerous conditions and disturbances. Police informants were offered drugs at this location and the FORCE unit raided the house. They have, not surprisingly, received notice of excess consumption of police services. The fact the home was condemned and officially vacant did not entirely stop the criminal activity. It continued to be used as a crack house by squatters and other illegal occupants. The number of police calls diminished, but the police continued to respond to criminal activity at this address, albeit at a lesser level than when it was occupied.

The behavior of a neighbor further complicates the situation at this address. She is thought by staff to be a mentally ill individual who is overly sensitive and racist. She reportedly has an avowed hatred of black people and was determined to force them out of the neighborhood. She is known to complain constantly and tends to take things too far. The fact that the owners do not seem to care much about the property makes this situation worse. They have not responded to letters from the district council regarding problems at the property, and seem profoundly disinterested in rehabilitating or even maintaining this property. At

Table 18. Nuisance Crimes

Violation	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Disorderly Boys	10 (52.6%)	8 (88.9%)	3 (75.0%)	21 (65.6%)
Narcotics/Drugs	9 (47.4%)	7 (77.8%)	3 (75.0%)	19 (59.4%)
Disturbances	10 (52.6%)	6 (88.9%)	2 (50.0%)	18 (56.3%)
Public Drinking	4 (21.1%)	5 (55.6%)	3 (75.0%)	12 (37.5%)
Prostitution	4 (21.1%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (25.0%)	7 (21.9%)
Loud Music	4 (21.1%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (15.6%)
Haranguing of Passers by	3 (15.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (9.4%)
Dog Fighting	2 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.3%)
Barking Dog Problems	2 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.3%)
Nuisance Crime Total	18 (94.7%)	8 (88.9%)	3 (75.0%)	29 (90.6%)

Property Crime

Property-related crimes were only slightly less common in our case studies than nuisance or violent crime. Of the problems discussed in the research as social incivilities, only auto theft is considered a property crime. In terms of the physical incivilities, vandalism is discussed. The most common property crimes reported for our case studies were vandalism (56%), theft (50%), burglary (47%) and auto theft (41%). There were also several cases of arson and dangerous conditions reported to police, however not at the same properties.

Table 19. Property Crimes

Violation	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Theft	4 (21.1%)	8 (88.9%)	4 (100.0%)	16 (50.0%)
Vandalism	9 (47.4%)	6 (66.7%)	3 (75.0%)	18 (56.3%)
Burglary	6 (31.6%)	7 (77.8%)	2 (50.0%)	15 (46.9%)
Auto Theft	7 (36.8%)	4 (44.4%)	2 (50.0%)	13 (40.6%)
Dangerous Conditions	2 (10.5%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (12.5%)
Arson	0 (0.0%)	4 (44.4%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (12.5%)
Property Crime Total	13 (42.1%)	9 (100.0%)	4 (100%)	26 (81.3%)

Violent Crime

Violent crime is both the most disturbing and most vexing component of our case studies. A high level of violent crime was reported for these chronic problem properties. Some form of violent crime was reported for 91 percent of our case studies in the 24 month study period. The most common type of violence reported was domestic violence (88%), followed by other violence (66%), fights (38%) and aggravated assault (34%). Also reported were weapons and missing persons in 16 percent of our cases, stalking in nine percent and robbery in six percent.

Table 20. Violent Crime/Crimes Against Persons

Violation	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Domestic Violence	16 (84.2%)	9 (100.0%)	3 (75.0%)	28 (87.5%)
Other Violence	9 (47.4%)	9 (100.0%)	3 (75.0%)	21 (65.6%)
Fights	3 (15.8%)	6 (66.7%)	3 (75.0%)	12 (37.5%)
Aggravated Assault	5 (26.3%)	4 (44.4%)	2 (50.0%)	11 (34.4%)
Weapons	2 (10.5%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (25.0%)	5 (15.6%)
Missing Persons	3 (15.8%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (25.0%)	5 (15.6%)
Stalking	0 (0.0%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (25.0%)	3 (9.4%)
Robbery	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (50.0%)	2 (6.3%)
Violent Crime Total	17 (89.5%)	9 (100.0%)	3 (75.0%)	29 (90.6%)

Given violent crime tends to be an “indoor” crime, with the notable exception of robbery, we were somewhat perplexed. The violent crime described and alluded to in the Broken Windows Theory and Incivilities Thesis, seemed to be “outdoor” crime— namely robbery, but also possibly fighting and gun play. A recent publication from the National Institute of Justice, *Disorder in Urban Neighborhoods— Does It Lead to Crime?* (2001) by Sampson and Raudenbush indicates “robbers respond to visual clues of social and physical disorder in a neighborhood. These cues may entice them to act, and this in turn undermines collective efficacy, producing a cycle of yet more disorder and ultimately more robberies.”¹⁸ However, although robbery was occasionally an issue for the case studies, far and away the most wide-spread category of violent crime we saw was domestic violence. This leads us to several possible conclusions on the Broken Windows Theory. One is that not all violent crimes are covered by the theory, only exterior violent crimes. Another is that cues in the exterior world work to encourage violence inside of residences. A third is that disorder does not promote violent crime *per se*, but that the conditions which create it, also create the violence. In other words, the underlying social conditions that create violent crime, also create social and physical disorder.

¹⁸ Robert J. Sampson and Stephen W. Raudenbush. *Disorder in Urban Neighborhoods—Does It Lead to Crime?* National Institute of Justice, Research in Brief. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, February 2001.

How the Problems Interact

The term “disorder” is perhaps the best characterization of what is happening in our case studies. One is struck by the chaos in the surroundings and the lives of the actors involved in these chronic problem properties. Highlighted below is a “top ten” list of the problems and crimes identified in our cases. Tables 21 and 22 provide further information along these lines.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Domestic Violence (88%) | 7. Burglary (47%) |
| 2. Disorderly Boys (66%) and Other Violence (66%) | 8. Windows/Screens (44%) and Junk Vehicles - Private Property (44%) |
| 3. Garbage/Trash Build-Up - Exterior (63%) | 9. Tall Grass and Weeds (41%) & Auto Theft (41%) |
| 4. Narcotics/Drugs (59%) | 10. Public Drinking (38%), Floor Coverings (38%) and Fights (38%) |
| 5. Disturbances (56%) and Vandalism (56%) | |
| 6. Theft (50%) | |

These problems paint a picture of households where there are frequent episodes of violence, problems with drinking and drugs, and an inability to maintain control of one's person and possessions. Not surprisingly, our efforts to deal with these problems are often tailored to look specifically at the immediate problem, whether it is domestic violence, torn screens or public drinking, which is discussed in the next chapter, *Dealing with the Problems*. Indeed, government is charged with doing just that. However, in the case of chronic problem properties, government must do more than just deal with the latest problem at hand. In order to keep these problems from presenting themselves time and again, efforts need to be made to cure and prevent all of the problems.

Table 21. Summary of Conditions

Violations	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Exterior Structural Problems	14 (73.7%)	9 (100.0%)	2 (50.0%)	25 (78.1%)
Garbage/Yard	18 (94.7%)	5 (55.6%)	4 (100.0%)	27 (84.4%)
<i>Exterior Problems Total</i>	19 (100.0%)	9 (100.0%)	4 (100.0%)	32 (100.0%)
Interior Structural Problems	7 (36.8%)	9 (100.0%)	3 (75.0%)	19 (59.4%)
Interior Systems Problems	8 (42.1%)	9 (100.0%)	2 (50.0%)	19 (59.4%)
Public Health Problems	3 (15.8%)	7 (77.8%)	3 (75.0%)	13 (40.6%)
<i>Interior Code Violations Total</i>	12 (63.3%)	9 (100.0%)	4 (100.0%)	25 (78.1%)
Nuisance Crime	18 (94.7%)	8 (88.9%)	3 (75.0%)	29 (90.6%)
Property Crime	13 (42.1%)	9 (100.0%)	4 (100%)	26 (81.3%)
Violent Crime	17 (89.5%)	9 (100.0%)	3 (75.0%)	29 (90.6%)
<i>Crime Total</i>	19 (100.0%)	9 (100.0%)	4 (100.0%)	32 (100.0%)

Table 22. Types of Code Violations and Crime Problems, by Case¹⁹

Name	Exterior		Interior			Crime		
	Garbage/ Yard	Structure	Structure	Systems	Health	Nuisance	Property	Violent
Alligator Alley	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Bad Boys	●	●				●	○	○
The Brothers Grim	●	●	○			○	●	○
Career Criminals	●					○	●	○
The Case Case	○	○	●	●		●	●	●
Cash Cow					○	○	●	●
Cracking-Up	●			○		●	●	○
Cultural Conflict	●	○				●		●
Danger Island		○	●	○	○	●	●	●
Dirty Business	●	○		○		○	●	
Dirty Dealing	●	○	○	●	○	●	●	○
Dog House	●	●		●		●	○	●
Double Gross	○			●		●	○	○
Double Trouble		○	●	○	○	●	○	●
Down 'N Out		●	●		●	●	●	●
Empty Promise	●	●	○	●		●	○	○
Errant Investor I	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	○
Errant Investor II	●					○		●
Fear Factor	●					○	○	●
Fight Club	○	○	○		○	●	●	●
Gangster Boyfriend	●	○				●		
Home Alone	●	○	○		○	○		●
La Cucaracha		○	●		○	●	●	●
Misplaced	●	●		●	○		○	●
Motel California	○	○				●	●	●
Nasty Four	○		●				●	○
Old and Ugly	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	
Over the Edge	●		○	○		●	●	○
Overwhelmed	●					○	●	○
Through the Cracks	●	○	○	●		○		●
Watering Hole	○		○	○		●	●	●
Weird Neighbor	○	●						○

KEY

○ = 1 - 25% of code violations or crimes in this category present at this property

● = 26 - 75% of code violations or crimes in this category present at this property

● = 76 - 100% of code violations or crimes in this category present at this property

Exterior Garbage/Yard Violations:

- 1) Garbage/Trash Buildup; 2) Junk Vehicle; 3) Tall Grass and Weeds; 4) Furniture; 5) Mattresses; 6) Appliances

Exterior Structural Violations:

- 1) Windows/Screens; 2) Door Locks: broken/missing; 3) Paint: bad condition; 4) Siding: bad condition; 5) Roof/Fascia/Soffits: holes/ leaking; 6) Outbuildings: poor condition; 7) Walls: holes, bad condition; 8) Stair Condition

Interior Structural Violations:

- 1) Other (Often Floor Coverings); 2) Doors: Missing, Bad Condition; 3) Holes in Walls; 4) Water Damage; 5) Stairs: Broken, Bad Condition

Interior Systems Violations:

- 1) Heat/Furnace; 2) Electricity; 3) Water Shutoff/Malfunction; 4) Gas; 5) Refrigerator; 6) Stove; 7) Water Heater

Interior Health Violations:

- 1) Garbage Build-up; 2) Rodents/Insect Infestation; 3) Overcrowding; 4) Smoke Detectors: missing/malfunctioning

Nuisance Crimes:

- 1) Disorderly Boys; 2) Narcotics/Drugs; 3) Disturbances; 4) Public Drinking; 5) Prostitution; 6) Loud Music; 7) Haranguing of Passers by; 8) Barking Dog Problems; 9) Dog Fighting

Property Crimes:

- 1) Vandalism; 2) Theft; 3) Burglary; 4) Auto Theft; 5) Dangerous Conditions; 6) Arson

Violent Crimes:

- 1) Domestic Violence; 2) Other Violence; 3) Child Abuse/Neglect; 4) Fights; 5) Aggravated Assault; 6) Weapons; 7) Missing Persons; 8) Stalking; 9) Robbery

¹⁹ This table indicates the variety of problems experienced in each category presented, not the severity of problems. For example, there are six exterior garbage/yard problems that may have occurred during the two-year study period. If three of the six occurred at this property, the ● indicates this.

DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS

The City of Saint Paul, as all cities, exists to protect the health, welfare and safety of those who live here. The City accomplishes this purpose by providing a rich array of tax and fee supported services designed to ensure that its citizens have an environment in which they can be healthy, safe and pursue happiness. The City is quite successful at achieving this purpose as evidenced by the increasing number of people who choose to live here and by its successes as compared to other cities. The City does, however, not always succeed in providing the desired environment. Crimes continue to be committed, people continue to become ill and various sorts of unpleasantness continue to detract from the quality of life in Saint Paul. Since life is not perfect, we learn to accept, and even expect, some violations of official laws, rules and regulations. Since it seems almost anything can be against the law, we want enforcement officers to exercise a great deal of discretion about when and how they enforce laws. We recognize people need a little space and are generally quite accepting of occasional behavior outside the formal rules. For example, hardly anyone in Minnesota obeys speed limits all the time, yet we expect only the most flagrant violators to be officially sanctioned.

The same is true of property Code Enforcement. There are few properties in Saint Paul where a determined inspector could not find a violation of some City ordinance. Yet they actually cite relatively few property owners for violations and even these properties are seldom cited for every possible violation. The way one inspector put it is “one beer can in a yard is not a problem, 50 beer cans may be a problem, but 500 beer cans in a yard is totally unacceptable.” Mitigation is not about achieving perfection. Rather, it is about achieving a level of compliance acceptable to the community without incurring undue costs or impinging too much on peoples right to live their lives with a reasonable degree of freedom.

While residents of Saint Paul may violate community behavioral norms from time to time, most behave as expected most of the time. The favorable influences of social norms, religious beliefs, moral fiber and/or fear of legal consequences work for most people. Even when citizens stray into unacceptable behavior, most respond positively to the application of internal or external pressures. The overwhelming majority of Saint Paulites either comply with community norms or are easily corrected when they go astray. For most, a word from a neighbor, a complaint from a family member, counseling from a religious leader, a visit from a police officer or the ongoing guidance of their conscience is sufficient to get them back on the right track. Unfortunately, not all respond to such influences. Continuing refusal to comply with community norms regarding acceptable behavior and/or property maintenance often manifests itself as a chronic problem property.

Failure to follow community norms is not a new phenomenon. The City has had more than 150 years of experience in dealing with such problems. This century and one-half of experience has resulted in a “pretty good” set of tools for the City to use to deal with such problems. For misbehavior the police often respond and “advise” the apparent offender to “straighten up” or, on occasion, arrest someone. For failure to maintain property, City officials may apply a variety of sanctions ranging from “verbal orders” to condemnations, emergency abatements and criminal citations. In this chapter we will examine the interventions used, largely without success, on 32 chronic problem properties we have selected for in-depth study. To help understanding, it is useful to distinguish among the City agencies empowered to take corrective action with respect to chronic problem properties. We will also address the City resources expended on these properties and the cost of these interventions.

Case Study: Double Trouble

- Rental Duplex Built in 1885.
- MV: \$49,700; MV per Unit: \$24,850.
- City Taxes: \$298
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$8,523
- Problems: Exploitive Landlord, Criminal Behavior of Unscreened Tenants, Exterior Code Violations.

“Double Trouble” is a very old— well over one hundred years— side-by-side duplex in an enclave of a pleasant old neighborhood which is checkered with problem and chronic problem properties. It has been for many years within the control of a landlord whom City staff consider to be the quintessential “slumlord.” He is notorious among City inspectors for being a lazy, cheap owner who makes undeserved profit by exploiting tenants who are unable to find or afford proper housing. He rents to tenants who he knows cannot afford to stay, and who are subsequently evicted due to nonpayment of rent. The landlord, of course, keeps their various deposits and then re-rents the property to yet another unfortunate family. He deals with the lowest end of the economic ladder by providing temporary housing and cycling tenants through the “revolving doors” of this duplex. This is only one of many properties managed by the owner and his family.

Not surprisingly, some of these unscreened tenants bring serious behavioral problems to this address. A neighborhood organizer said that some of the tenants who have come and gone were criminal and definitely neighborhood problems, while others were “good people who have had a rough life.” The police are frequently called to deal with just about every type of

minor, and sometimes more serious, crimes. There are narcotics, domestic assaults, fights, runaway children and more. The police cope by writing reports, investigating, giving advice and sometimes arresting or transporting to detox centers. The flow of criminal activity is largely unaffected as each set of bad tenants is replaced with another. The community organizer for the areas summed it up by saying, “you name it - it has happened here.” Most of the tenants in this property are seen as “sad sacks” who have no idea how to cope with their children and their miserable economic situation.

Maintenance of this building is abysmal. There have been problems with the furnace, walls and doors, along with exterior garbage and interior pest infestations. The owner will not fix anything— unless forced to by the City and then makes only minimal repairs. In all, during the 24 month study period, this property was the subject of four correctional notices, two zoning citations, one summary abatement and one condemnation.

There seems little hope for this situation. The tenants bring serious behavioral problems and have few life skills. The owner depends upon this incompetence and cycles tenants through these units year after year. The neighbors call the police and complain to the district council which “watches” the situation and tries to facilitate official City intervention. The City acts by making Code Enforcement visits and even condemning the building as unfit for human habitation. The owner resists and the situation continues largely unabated. This property has been in PP2000, the Rental Registration program, the Good Neighbor Program, monitored by the Problem Properties Task Force and been in almost every other program the City has developed to deal with chronic problem properties

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department is responsible for dealing with those who violate laws and City ordinances. Patrol officers do the bulk of the day-to-day enforcement of laws and the preservation of the peace. Patrol officers are usually the first responders to calls for police service and usually determine how to deal with the situation when they arrive on the scene. They often have a wide range of discretion in selecting the appropriate police response and are expected to exercise judgement in selecting responses. Sometimes they will apprehend and arrest alleged offenders or they may decide that no police action is required and simply leave the scene. Patrol officers operate largely on a complaint basis. Mostly, calls are received from citizens in the emergency communications center and patrol officers are dispatched by radio to respond to specific complaints or requests for service. Patrol officers may, on occasion, engage in systematic enforcement, particularly during a special initiative such as Heavy Enforcement Activity for Thirty Days (HEAT) but most of their time and energy is dedicated to responding to calls.

Patrol

The police primarily respond to concerns regarding inappropriate behavior. Sometimes these misbehaviors are serious criminal matters but, more often, they are less serious, but troublesome, disturbances of the public peace. The Police have authority to deal with property maintenance issues but generally leave such matters to other City agencies. The Chief of Police has recently increased the Department's focus on property maintenance issues but these concerns remain peripheral to most law enforcement officers. Behavioral issues are, and have always been, central to the mission of the Police Department.

The Police Department responds to about 250,000 calls for service each year. Most of the time the action taken is to "advise" real or suspected offenders to "straighten up" and/or to advise crime victims how to respond to real or imagined threats to their safety or comfort. Sometimes they write official reports and sometimes they take alleged offenders into police custody. Police responses to crime are "time-tested" and work most of the time. There are, however, situations where traditional police responses do not work. When criminals do not respond well to traditional police tactics, the department sometimes establishes special units to address the problem. This is why most larger police departments have developed special units to deal with vice, homicide, traffic enforcement and drug trafficking. Few, if any, police departments have developed special units dedicated to chronic problem properties. The FORCE unit does target specific properties because of suspected drug dealing. This sometimes correlates with the presence of other crimes but, for the most part, the impact of FORCE unit activities on non-drug related crimes is incidental, not purposeful.

Table 23. Police Calls for Service Load Change, 1999, 2000 and 2001

Name	1999 Calls	2000 Calls	2001 Calls	Actual Change 1999-2000 (% Change)		Actual Change 2000-2001 (% Change)	
Alligator Alley	74	72	75	-2	(-3%)	3	(4%)
Bad Boys	59	22	37	-37	(-63%)	15	(68%)
The Brothers Grim	21	25	31	4	(19%)	6	(24%)
Career Criminals	17	29	11	12	(71%)	-18	(-62%)
The Case Case	57	57	71	0	0	14	(25%)
Cash Cow	147	60	111	-87	(-59%)	51	(85%)
Cracking-Up	14	150	112	136	(971%)	-38	(-25%)
Cultural Conflict	26	46	56	20	(77%)	10	(22%)
Danger Island	76	138	95	62	(82%)	-43	(-31%)
Dirty Business	2	7	0	5	(250%)	-7	(-100%)
Dirty Dealing	81	69	3	-12	(-15%)	-66	(-96%)
Dog House	5	9	12	4	(80%)	3	(33%)
Double Gross	10	29	60	19	(109%)	31	(107%)
Double Trouble	53	45	29	-8	(-15%)	-16	(-36%)
Down 'N Out	50	41	35	-9	(-18%)	-6	(-15%)
Empty Promise	48	34	0	-14	(-29%)	-34	(-100%)
Errant Investor I	22	8	1	-14	(-64%)	-7	(-88%)
Errant Investor II	6	12	10	6	(100%)	-2	(-17%)
Fear Factor	5	8	14	3	(60%)	6	(75%)
Fight Club	54	58	23	4	(7%)	-35	(-60%)
Gangster Boyfriend	0	24	2	24	(-)	-22	(-92%)
Home Alone	9	8	6	-1	(-11%)	-2	(-25%)
La Cucaracha	92	94	54	2	(2%)	-40	(-43%)
Misplaced	5	0	2	-5	(-100%)	2	(-)
Motel California	149	147	157	-2	(-1%)	10	(7%)
Nasty Four	20	27	45	7	(35%)	18	(67%)
Old and Ugly	27	27	18	0	0	-9	(-33%)
Over the Edge	7	14	4	7	(100%)	-10	(-71%)
Overwhelmed	15	21	15	6	(40%)	-6	(-29%)
Through the Cracks	8	7	4	-1	(-13%)	-3	(-43%)
Watering Hole	32	42	50	10	(32%)	8	(19%)
Weird Neighbor	2	2	13	0	0	11	(550%)

Evaluating the effectiveness of police activities by looking only at chronic problem properties is unfair and circular. It is illogical to purposely select properties because they have been resistant to official interventions and then assess the effectiveness of such interventions based on these properties. We are not, therefore, intending to suggest police interventions are not generally effective. We are only intending to examine a small number of properties in Saint Paul that seemingly do not respond to police, and other, interventions to better understand the effect of these resistant properties on the City and, perhaps, to stimulate some new thinking about how to deal with these persistent community irritants.

Police Patrol Services

In beginning to think about the relationship between calls for police service and our 32 chronic problem properties, it is illustrative to first recognize the sheer volume of calls for police service emanating from or about these addresses. As shown in Table 1, these 32 properties generated 2,488 calls for police service in only 24 months. This averages more than 100 calls per month for the sample group of properties or an average of 3.24 police calls for service per month for each property. On average, the police were called to each of these properties almost once every week for an ongoing period of two years.

While looking at the average number of police calls for service for this group of chronic problem properties is useful, it does somewhat obscure the truly extraordinary number of calls for police service at some properties. As shown in Table 1, the number of calls for police service ranged from a low of four (*Weird Neighbor*) to a high of 296 (*Motel California*). To get a sense of how often police have responded to calls at *Motel California*, 296 calls over a period of two years, or 104 weeks means the police were called to this property an average of almost three times (2.9) every week for two years. Besides *Motel California*, there are seven other properties in our group that averaged more than one police call each week for two years. These properties are *Fight Club*, *The Case Case*, *Cracking-Up*, *Alligator Alley*, *Dirty Dealing*, *La Cucaracha*, *Danger Island* and *Cash Cow*. As might be expected, most of these properties are multi-unit buildings housing many occupants or they are bars. While this may help, at least partially, explain the unusually high number of police calls, there are many other buildings in Saint Paul, with even more residents, which do not experience these levels of service. Another factor that may help explain the seeming inefficacy of these repeated police interventions is the mobile population served by some of these buildings. It may be that police are successfully dealing with one troublesome resident only to have them replaced by another bad actor. Again, however, other buildings also serve mobile populations and do so without becoming chronic problem properties. These high numbers of police calls for service seem to have more to do with the management, or lack of management, than with the type of building or the mobility of tenants.

There is also something to be learned by considering the properties in our group that experienced very few police calls for service. These properties, such as *Weird Neighbor*, *Misplaced* and *Dirty Business* are chronic problems almost solely because of property maintenance issues. They have had few dealings with the police because the police seldom deal directly with property maintenance issues, especially, if there is no associated criminal behavior. These properties are, however, heavy consumers of City property maintenance enforcement activities as will be apparent when these activities are considered later in this report. An important thing to remember is that some properties are problems mostly because of the misbehavior of occupants, some properties are chronic problems mostly because of property maintenance issues and some, in fact many, are chronic problem properties for both reasons.

Table 24. Police Calls for Service: Dispositions During Study Period (1999-2000)

Name	Action Taken on Property			% Calls Officer Action Taken on Property**	Total
	Advised	Reports*	Detox		
Alligator Alley	66	29 (20 %)	2	66 %	146
Bad Boys	25	28 (35 %)	0	65 %	81
Brothers Grim	17	12 (26 %)	0	63 %	46
Career Criminals	22	16 (35 %)	0	83 %	46
The Case Case	53	32 (28 %)	1	75 %	114
Cash Cow	98	60 (29 %)	0	76 %	207
Cracking-Up	87	31 (19 %)	0	72 %	164
Cultural Conflict	35	5 (7 %)	0	55 %	73
Danger Island	107	52 (24 %)	0	74 %	214
Dirty Business	6	2 (22 %)	0	89 %	9
Dirty Dealing	53	20 (13 %)	2	50 %	150
Dog House	5	3 (30 %)	0	80 %	10
Double Gross	23	7 (18 %)	0	75 %	40
Double Trouble	49	20 (24 %)	1	50 %	83
Down 'N Out	51	16 (18 %)	4	78 %	91
Empty Promise	22	21 (29 %)	0	60 %	72
Errant Investor I	19	4 (13 %)	0	77 %	30
Errant Investor II	5	7 (39 %)	0	67 %	18
Fear Factor	7	0 (0 %)	0	54 %	13
Fight Club	46	28 (26 %)	3	70 %	110
Gangster Boyfriend	9	3 (13 %)	0	50 %	24
Home Alone	7	4 (24 %)	0	65 %	17
La Cucaracha	73	52 (28 %)	3	69 %	185
Misplaced	1	3 (60 %)	0	80 %	5
Motel California	138	70 (24 %)	11	74 %	296
Nasty Four	25	9 (19 %)	0	72 %	47
Old and Ugly	24	18 (33 %)	1	78 %	55
Over the Edge	9	7 (33 %)	0	76 %	21
Overwhelmed	9	14 (39 %)	0	64 %	36
Through the Cracks	6	5 (33 %)	0	73 %	15
Watering Hole	20	32 (43 %)	1	71 %	75
Weird Neighbor	1	3 (75 %)	0	100 %	4

* "Reports" as a category is used when a report is written, and it does not preclude arrest, or citation as an outcome. The percent of reports may be used as a "proxy" for the seriousness of the incidents.

** There were several categories of call outcomes not included in the table as "officer action on property:" Traffic (TRF), Gone on Arrival (GOA), Duplicate (DUP), Canceled (CAN), Previously Canceled (PCN), Unfounded (UNF), Service Not Required (SNR).

Cost of Police Patrol Services

As explained in the methods section, we estimate it costs the City an average of \$130 for Police Patrol to respond to a call for service. Based on this estimate, it cost the City \$323,440 to respond to calls from our 32 properties during the two years being studied. This translates to \$161,720 per year for these properties. Dividing these estimated annual costs by the 32 properties studies yields an average annual cost of \$5,054 per property.

The properties requiring above average levels of Police Patrol services yields some astonishing costs. For example, the *Motel California* with 296 calls during the two-year study period yields an estimated two-year cost of \$38,480 or \$19,240 annually. The estimated annual costs for other high consumers of Police Patrol services are *Fight Club* (\$5,395), *Case Case* (\$7,410), *Cracking-Up* (\$10,660), *Alligator Alley* (\$9,490), *Dirty Dealing* (\$9,750), *La Cucaracha* (\$12,025), *Danger Island* (\$13,910) and *Cash Cow* (\$13,455). Bear in mind, as will be discussed later, Police Patrol costs are only one of many costs the City incurs in seeking to deal with these chronic problem properties. Also, it is important to understand, as will be elaborated on later in this report, these costs far exceed any tax revenues generated by these chronic problem properties. For example, the *Motel California*, in the year 2000, paid \$3,028 in municipal taxes to the City of Saint Paul while costing the City of Saint Paul more than six times (\$19,240) that amount in Police Patrol costs alone.

FORCE Unit

The FORCE unit is dedicated to combating street-level drug dealing. This unit of about 25 officers has developed its own repertoire of tools for pursuing its mission. They focus on particular properties and use confidential informants, surveillance, “knock & talks” and search warrants to detect and interdict street level drug dealing. They also seek to coordinate with other police and non-police enforcement agencies to prevent the creation and continuation of drug dealing locations. This unit generally undertakes investigations of particular individuals or locations based on information from sources suggesting ongoing drug related criminal activity. While the FORCE Unit does receive and respond to complaints, their basic method of operation is investigative rather than complaint-based.

FORCE Unit Services

An examination of the FORCE unit’s activities related to our sample of chronic problem properties illuminates the high correlation between street-level drug trafficking and chronic problem properties. Twenty-two of the 32 properties in this study received the attention of the FORCE unit within the two-year study period.

The most common FORCE tactics with these properties were to conduct surveillance and attempt to “make drug buys.” This was done with 15 of our sample properties during 1999 and 2000. These activities resulted in the execution of 11 search warrants being served by the FORCE Unit. These search warrants resulted in 13 persons being arrested. It is important to understand the execution of search warrants by the FORCE Unit is not at all as benign as it may sound. The execution of these warrants often involves the forced entry of highly trained and heavily armed police officers into the premise. These are very aggressive and dangerous operations involving

Case Study: La Cucaracha

- 24 Unit Rental built in 1971.
- MV: \$1,107,800, MV per unit: \$39,564.
- City Taxes: \$4,245
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$19,696
- Problems: Cockroaches, Criminal Activity, Prostitution, Drugs.

“La Cucaracha” is a relatively new and somewhat isolated 24-unit apartment building in a larger complex. It is located in a very diverse, but stable neighborhood. The tenants are predominately elderly women and low income families, some of whom do not speak English. However, there are also a few tenants with reported serious mental illness, those with criminal histories, and those who have criminal companions staying frequently at the building. The diversity of tenants has presented a variety of types of problems for the on-site management of the building, as well as its occupants.

On visiting the building in the daylight, one is immediately aware of the many unsupervised children running around the parking lot and other common areas of the building, which creates a sense of overcrowding and disorder. Other problems are not as apparent on the surface. For instance, this building has repeatedly had problems with cockroach infestations which inspectors attribute to the poor housekeeping skills of some of the tenants.

One informant advised that the building used to be horrible years ago, and maybe getting bad again with

drugs, guns and fearful residents. There is, indeed, a lot of police activity with this building involving drinking, fights, theft, assault, arson, burglary, fraud, weapons and narcotics. Staff have also reported evidence of prostitution in the parking lot. During our study period alone, the police have been called to this building 185 times.* The greatest number of these calls have been to the common areas of the building, but several units have accounted for more than 20 police calls each. As an illustration, there was a case where a mentally ill woman was plagued by the real disturbances made by a drug dealer in the unit above hers. Unfortunately, after the drug dealer vacated, the woman continued her constant calling of the police—not understanding that the bad tenant had actually moved. The new tenant was a young law-abiding woman who then had to put up with yelling and a broom handle tapping on her floor whenever she walked from one room to another. In another case, one unit in the building was condemned as the result of arson damage caused by a tenant. Notably, there were also seven police calls to this building during our study period on vandalism—three instances in general areas of the building and four in specific units. Nearly all of these resulted in police reports being written.

Not surprisingly, the Fire Department has frequently been called to this address. In only two years, there have been 13 fire runs and eight Emergency Medical Service calls. These are extraordinary service demands for a building of this size. Not all the building’s code violations are severe or dramatic. Rather, the primary issue at this property are the behavioral problems caused by residents and their guests.

high levels of planning and coordination. They often yield illegal weapons and significant quantities of illegal drugs. They are also very expensive operations involving many officers, squads and special tactical weapons.

When FORCE officers do not have sufficient cause to obtain a search warrant, they frequently conduct “knock & talks” with the residents of suspect properties. This occurred with 14 of the study properties. These visits usually involve two officers going to the premise and explaining their concerns and suspicions to the residents. They then strongly suggest they refrain from any further illegal behavior. Somewhat surprisingly, these “knock & talks” are often quite effective. They sometimes lead residents to stop drug dealing, at least for a while. Other times, the residents will allow officers to enter the premise without a warrant and, on occasion, the officers observe evidence of illegal behavior which can then be used to make an arrest or to obtain a search warrant. As is apparent from the numbers, the same property may experience both a “knock & talk” and warrant searches at different times. Most commonly, officers will conduct a “knock & talk” if initial surveillance does not justify the execution of a search warrant in the hopes the apparent problems will resolve themselves. When “knock and talks” do not work and the problems persist, the police may continue to obtain sufficient additional evidence to justify a search warrant.

Table 25. FORCE Interventions

Intervention	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
Properties in Group (N =)	19	9	4	32
FORCE: buys/surveillance	10 (52.6%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (25.0%)	15 (46.9%)
Average FORCE: buys/surv	1.3	2.2	0.5	1.5
FORCE Knock n' Talks	6 (31.6%)	7 (77.8%)	1 (25.0%)	14 (43.8%)
Average FORCE K n' Talks	0.9	1.4	0.5	1.0
FORCE Arrests	8 (42.1%)	5 (55.6%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (40.6%)
Average FORCE Arrests (x) ¹	0.7	1.1	0	0.8
FORCE Warrants	8 (42.1%)	3 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (34.4%)
Warrant Arrests (Patrol)	3 (15.8%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (25.0%)	5 (15.6%)

Cost of FORCE Unit Services

Given the work force required, the special skills involved, the need for special equipment and the cost of informants; the FORCE Unit is an expensive activity dedicated to an especially difficult problem. There is little doubt that attempting to interdict street-level drug trafficking is an expensive undertaking. This may be a necessary public investment to preserve order and livability in Saint Paul given the enormous social cost of unrestrained drug-dealing. Given the complexity of FORCE Unit operations, creating reliable cost estimates is difficult. Our methods for reaching the estimates used in this section are explained in the “Methods Section” beginning on page 13. These estimates are admittedly conservative. The true costs are almost surely higher than our estimates.

Case Study: Dog House

- Owner Occupied Duplex Built in 1889.
- MV: \$46,600, MV per Unit: \$23,300.
- City Taxes: \$176
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$2,387
- Problems: Dog Fighting, Garbage, Drugs, Prostitution.

The “Dog House” is a very old, low-value central City duplex. One unit is an owner-occupied homestead with the other unit being rented. Both the owner and the tenants have been sources of continuing problems. There are a steady stream of problems at this address with peaks during the summer months.

Since this is an owner-occupied building, the City has no information about the condition of the interior of the building, not having been given permission to inspect it. The exterior has, however, been the source of several problems. There have been many orders to remove garbage from the yard. Tags have been written for failure to maintain the garage and there is still an outstanding warrant for failure to appear on one of these tags. The property was condemned in one instance because electrical service was shut-off due to failure to pay a bill of more than \$3,000. The condemnation was lifted when they paid the bill with County assistance.

Dogs are the major source of problems at this address. It appears the tenant’s son likes to conduct dog fights with pit bulls. These dog fights have taken place in the basement of the building, so it is apparent the owner is aware of this illegal activity and has not intervened. It is unclear if the owner is an active or passive participant in this dog fighting activity, but it is obvious he knows it goes on in the basement. There have been many Animal Control calls to this address and subsequent Humane Society involvement. This dog fighting is known to have occurred from 1998 through 2000. In 1999, Animal Control impounded a dog from this address after the people moved (temporarily) to Saint Louis and abandoned it. The tenant’s son has been tagged for many dog related offenses such as dog fighting, running-at-large, no license and no shots. The tenant was finally cited in 2000 with running-at-large, no rabies shots and no dog licence, and she currently owes \$400 in fines.

The tenants, and perhaps the owner, are believed to be involved in other behavioral problems such as drug-dealing and prostitution. The tenant’s daughter is thought to engage in prostitution and her boyfriend reportedly deals drugs from the house, possibly in her absence. The property was raided by FORCE in 1997 and again in 1998. Despite the long history of problems at this property, there are few police calls to this address in recent years. Since criminal activity continues, it may be the neighbors have come to accept

La Cucaracha was under FORCE Unit surveillance seven times and experienced six “knock & talks” and two FORCE Unit arrests during our two-year study period. The total estimated cost of surveillance of this property was \$1,950 or almost \$1,000 a year. The cost of six “knock & talks” at \$200 each is an additional \$1,200. This yields a total cost of \$3,150 or about \$1,575 annually for “knock & talks” and surveillance. Also, the two arrests made by the FORCE Unit at this address cost an estimated \$914 each for a total of \$1,828. Totaling the cost of FORCE Unit activities at these property results in a total cost of \$4,978 or an average of \$2,489 annually.

Dirty Dealing was also under surveillance by the FORCE Unit seven times during the study period for an estimated cost of \$1,950. In addition, the FORCE Unit conducted two “knock & talks” plus one warrant service and an arrest. They yield an estimated \$400 for “knock & talks,” \$1,950 for surveillance, \$914 for an arrest and \$2,127 to serve a warrant. This yields a total estimated cost of \$5,391 or an average of \$2,695 annually. The *Brothers Grim* is yet another example of a drug dealing location with considerable FORCE Unit costs. Within only two years the FORCE Unit had it under surveillance four times, conducted four “knock & talks” and made three arrests. These activities cost the City at least \$1,300, \$800 and \$2,742, respectively for a total cost of \$4,842 or an average of \$2,421 annually. These are only some examples of how much it costs the City to attempt to deal with the drug-dealing within some chronic problem properties. For our sample of 32 chronic problem properties, we estimate that the total FORCE cost was \$55,300 during the two-yea study period.

Table 26. Properties Requiring Interventions

City Department/Agency	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) Program	N/A	9 (100.0%)	3 (75.0%)	12 (37.5%)
Per Unit Average	N/A	0.6	0.02	0.3
Code Enforcement	19 (100.0%)	5 (55.6%)	3 (75.0%)	27 (84.4%)
Per Unit Average	4.0	0.4	.002	2.5
Police	19 (100.0%)	9 (100.0%)	4 (100.0%)	32 (100%)
Per Unit Average (×)	35.8	8.9	0.6	24.0
Per Unit Median	24.0	7.0	0.0	10.6
Fire	6 (31.6%)	8 (88.9%)	3 (50.0%)	17 (53.1%)
Per Unit Average	0.3	0.5	0.06	0.4
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)	10 (52.6%)	7 (77.8%)	4 (100.0%)	21 (65.6%)
Per Unit Average	0.9	0.8	0.06	0.8
Licensing	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (75.0%)	3 (9.4%)
Zoning	2 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (25.0%)	3 (9.4%)
Animal Control	0 (0.0%)	5 (55.6%)	1 (25.0%)	6 (18.8%)

Case Study: Misplaced

- Towing Service (*inoperative*).
- MV: \$20,500.
- City Taxes: \$144
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$1,982
- Problems: Exterior Mess, Vacant Building Resulting from Fire, Junk Vehicles

“Misplaced” is an old gas station converted into a towing service and garage. Fire seriously damaged the building in June 1999 and it has been a registered vacant building since that time. The owner has continued to try to operate a business there and sometimes tows vehicles and stores them in the lot adjoining the damaged building. The building is in an historic preservation district and has been designated by the Historic Preservation Commission as a significant site. The site is polluted and is a “dirty business” with an excessive number of cars associated with it, often occupying local streets. While perhaps not the most desirable neighbor, there were no special problems with the property until the fire.

During the study period, the owner has been cited for garbage, an electricity shutoff, a water shutoff, roof damage, outbuilding condition, junk vehicles and an illegal advertising sign. The City also responded with three vehicle abatements, two summary abatements

and the property has been condemned three times. Finally, there have been many issues concerning it’s business license, but no significant police activity.

This entire problem revolves around the owner. He is “misplaced in time and location.” He is not a clean person, drinks a “fair bit” and has an old time junkyard mentality according to all of our interviews. Some people have reported that drinking may be a factor, although it is unclear whether this is significant. A female City Inspector reported that on two occasions he appeared intoxicated and invited her to go drinking with him. Not surprising, she declined. Some staff see him as a drunk who does not know what he is doing. Others believe him to be a weird character who lacks the mental capacity to run this or any other business. City staff report he drinks and is seemingly unable to complete even the simplest tasks without near daily monitoring. He does have a son who has proposed moving his landscaping business to this location, but the neighbors find that prospect almost as unappealing.

As to the current situation, this is a transitional neighborhood and very sensitive to anything that may discourage investment in the area. The City’s Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) has tried to broker a sale of this property but could not make it work. City staff have tried just about everything with this property and have communicated

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Department has both systematic and call-based responses to problem properties. Fire Suppression and Emergency Medical Services are usually dispatched in response to specific calls for service. The Code Enforcement activities of Fire Prevention are, however, both complaint-based and systematic. Fire Prevention is responsible for ensuring compliance with fire and property maintenance codes for residential buildings with three or more units plus commercial buildings. To fulfill this mission, Fire Prevention relies primarily on its Certificate of Occupancy program. This program requires buildings to successfully pass a fire safety and property maintenance inspection every two years. Failure to pass such inspections may lead to the revocation of the Certificate of Occupancy and, ultimately, to the closure of the building. While biennial Certificate of Occupancy inspection is the Fire Department's primary tool for ensuring compliance with property maintenance codes, Fire Prevention does respond to complaints from tenants and others who may be concerned about the safety or maintenance of a building within their area of responsibility.

Fire Suppression and Emergency Medical Services

Fire Suppression is the function traditionally associated with fire departments. This activity, simply put, protects lives and property by extinguishing fires and providing related safety services. Emergency Medical Services provide paramedic and emergency ambulance services. While it might seem chronic problems properties would not require any special level of fire suppression or emergency medical services, this is not so. Some chronic problem properties used extraordinary levels of fire suppression and emergency medical services during the study period.

There is wide variability in the fire suppression services used by the chronic problem properties in this study. Almost half (15) of the properties experienced no fire suppression calls at all during the two years study period. Another five had only one call for fire suppression services. Eight properties had between two and five fire suppression calls. As for emergency medical services, six of the properties received emergency medical services more than ten times within two years. The extraordinary finding is that four of the properties experienced ten or more emergency medical service calls lead by *Motel California* with 31 and *Cash Cow* with 51.

The total fire suppression costs for the 32 properties studied is estimated to be \$63,066. We estimate emergency medical services costs to total \$80,432. This represents a total estimated cost for Fire Department services for these 32 properties to be \$143,498 or \$71,749 annually.

Cash Cow is a 69-unit building on the East Side of Saint Paul with 51 fire suppression and 38 emergency medical service calls within only two years. This means Fire Department services were dispatched to this location an average of about once every two weeks. In seeking to understand the very high number of both fire suppression and emergency medical services calls, it is important to understand that when responding to a call for emergency medical services, the Fire Department dispatches the nearest unit. Commonly, this nearest crew is not a paramedic crew, but rather a fire crew. They also dispatch a paramedic crew. This is to ensure that response time is as fast as possible. This does, however, mean that they often dispatch two crews to a single emergency medical service call. So in this case, 38 of the 51 fire suppression responses were probably "first responses" to emergency medical service and not responses to actual fire alarms. The fact there were 13 fire suppression calls without emergency medical service calls does, however, suggest comparatively frequent fire alarms. There were clearly significant problems at this property related

Watering Hole

- Commercial Bar Built in 1949.
- MV: \$94,200.
- City Taxes: \$664
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$6,307
- Problems: License Problems, Public Drinking, Assaults, Indifferent Owners.

The “Watering Hole” is a bar with bad management, resulting in license and crime problems. It is in a mixed-use area surrounded by a few other businesses, some residential and large industrial tracts. Initially the district council did not realize this property was within their areas of responsibility. This low profile is puzzling given its long history as a problem property, except that it is physically isolated and it may not have generated a significant number of complaints to the district council from its immediate neighbors.

Licensing problems resulted from failing to pay licensing fees, and for serving alcohol and tobacco to minors. At one point, they owed \$3,769 in delinquent license fees and LIEP had to initiate adverse actions to collect fees several times.

The Police have been called to this bar, on average, more than once every week for the past two years. They had dealt with all types of criminal behavior from public drinking, alarms, child abuse/neglect, disorderly boys, domestic assault, fights, theft, assault, vandalism, aggravated assault, auto theft, fraud and narcotics. The City Council closed the bar for five days in 1999 because of underage drinking and refusing admittance to police officers. Police officers were again refused admittance in 2000 resulting in another closure and a \$1,000 fine.

The owners, a couple retired from traditional 9-5 jobs, do not seem to care about the problems at the bar and have occasionally been belligerent with police and City license inspectors. They often hired patrons to tend bar, but the patrons seemed more interested in drinking on the job than managing the business. Management operated under a “just let things happen” attitude and not surprisingly, things did. Toward the end of the study period, the owners had both financial and health problems. At their last appearance before the City Council they promised to sell the business. This came to pass. Unfortunately, the new owners have had a similar run of problems and the business has again been closed down the City.*

to fire safety, arson and false alarms requiring frequent responses from fire crews. The cost of these Fire Department services to *Cash Cow* are substantial. The 38 emergency medical services calls cost an estimated \$17,366. Adding to this an estimated cost of \$23,307 for fire suppression yields a total cost for Fire Department services of \$40,673 over two years or \$20,336 annually. Since the property paid only \$9,145 a year in municipal taxes, it is apparent the financial drain the property creates for the City.

The *Motel California* generated 31 fire suppression responses and 30 emergency medical services. As with *Cash Cow*, these probably mostly represent two Fire Department responses to the same incident. Nonetheless, this is still a very high level of use Fire Department services. Adding together the cost of fire suppression response of \$14,167 and emergency medical services of \$13,710, yields a cost of Fire Department services of \$27,877 for two years or an average of \$13,983 annually.

Fire Prevention - Certificate of Occupancy

The Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) program managed by the Fire Department is a powerful weapon in the City's war against substandard buildings. Under this program, all buildings with three or more dwelling units and all commercial properties are required to acquire and maintain a C of O. For an owner to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy, Fire Department inspectors must find it to be in full compliance with State laws and City ordinances regarding fire safety and property maintenance. Inspections are conducted every two years unless complaints result in more frequent inspections. Failure to maintain a current C of O can result in a building being closed. Both the City and most building owners take this program very seriously as the lack of a Certificate of Occupancy can have serious financial consequences for the property owner if the building is ordered vacated.

Thirteen of the 32 chronic problem properties in this study are required to maintain Certificates of Occupancy. All these properties have experienced C of O inspections in recent years and six have had their Certificates of Occupancy revoked. *Misplaced*, *Watering Hole*, *Alligator Alley* and *Cash Cow* all had their Certificates of Occupancy revoked once during our two-year study period. *Old and Ugly* and *Case Case* experienced four C of O revocations each during this time.

Despite the vigor with which the Fire Department manages the C of O program, it alone is insufficient to eliminate chronic problem properties. While it seems the revocation of a Certificate of Occupancy would be a powerful tool in attempting to deal with substandard buildings, its effectiveness is limited by the Fire Department's reticence to order tenants to vacate a building because the owner does not have a current C of O. The consequences of effecting such an order can be devastating to tenants who have no where else to go. This is particularly the case with large buildings where vacation could result in the displacement of large numbers of tenants. Recalcitrant owners who are willing to challenge the Fire Department can often continue to operate their substandard building despite the Fire Department's refusal to issue a C of O. Also, as is apparent from the properties with four revocations, the owners may comply briefly only to revert to their earlier unhealthy and dangerous behavior.

Besides the regularly scheduled biennial inspections, Fire inspectors respond to complaints about safety and property maintenance in building subject to Certificate of Occupancy inspections. Not surprisingly, they have received complaints about twelve of the thirteen C of O properties in this study. The highest number of complaints came from *The Case Case* with twenty. *La Cucaracha*, *Motel California* and *Cash Cow* were the next highest with eleven, ten and nine, respectively.

Case Study: Alligator Alley

- 30 -Unit Rental Built in 1967.
- MV: \$618,000, MV per unit: \$20,600.
- City Taxes: \$2,242
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$13,829
- Problems: Uncooperative Landlord, Code Violations, Tenant Crime.

“Alligator Alley” is a relatively new 30-unit apartment building in a central and highly visible location within its neighborhood. It has been a problem property for many years. Records show concerns about the behavior of tenants going back 10 years or more. Maintenance of the property has also been a continuing problem with regular reoccurrences of garbage and abandoned vehicles on the outside. The interior of the building has exhibited just about every possible property code violation, resulting in the Certificate of Occupancy being revoked on two occasions during our study period. Upon one of many visits to the building, a City inspector found one unit occupied by seven pit bulls and an alligator, in addition to its human occupants.

Behavior problems are evident. The police are called to this property on a regular basis to deal with misbehavior principally emanating from five living units and the parking lot. The behavioral problems, such a domestic assault, runaways, disorderly boys, theft and other minor crimes, are symptomatic of troubled family situations. The parking lot has been the source of many police responses for largely minor offenses. There have, however, been allegations of prostitution and drug dealing in the parking lot. The general situation is that a few tenants regularly engage in minor criminal behavior that scares and intimidates the other residents and neighbors. The police response

to most calls has been to advise with few reports being written. During our study period, 3 units and the general area of the building generated 55 percent of the calls to the building, while 11 of the units generated no calls whatsoever. In the year following our study period, a similar level of calls for police service came in to the City.

Some of the occupants, but certainly not all, are not fulfilling their responsibility to behave in a responsible and law-abiding manner. This continuing misbehavior poisons the living environment for most of the residents who do not cause problems. These neighbors have attempted to respond to these problems by calling the police and even considering a tenant’s remedy action to seek court assistance with building maintenance. These efforts have been largely unsuccessful. While the police have responded to literally hundreds of calls to this building, they have not affected the continuing misbehavior of some tenants. Similarly, the occupants’ effort to initiate a tenant’s remedy action failed due to the complications in trying to invoke this unwieldy remedy.

There is little evidence that the owners and managers of this property are interested in fulfilling their obligations to their law-abiding tenants and neighbors. The owners have been uncooperative with City inspectors and have refused to make needed repairs or have made them in a substandard fashion. The City has inspected this property frequently and issued many correction orders which have, for the most part, been ignored by the owners. This led the City not only to revoke the Certificate of Occupancy, but to issue a citation when occupancy continued despite the revocation. However, when brought before a judge, the matter was disposed of with a \$100 fine and a brief lecture.

As may be the genesis of chronic problem properties, all of the responsible parties have been unable or unwilling to fulfill their responsibilities. The tenants continue to misbehave, tenants’ organization is lacking or ineffective, the police mostly advise, the landlord poorly manages the property and City inspectors issue

The high number of repeat inspections required in response to the high number of complaints from these properties greatly impacts the Fire Department's costs in administering this program. It is also further evidence of the resistance of some property owners to maintaining their properties in a safe and healthy manner.

We estimate that the cost is about \$150 per call. Of the 13 properties studied, subject to Certificate of Occupancy requirements, twelve were the subject of complaints to Fire Prevention during our two year period. A total of 77 additional inspections were required for a total estimated cost of \$12,150. This is an average of \$1,000 for each property or \$500 annually. These calls were not, however, distributed evenly among the subject properties. While most had more than one, the *Case Case* was the leader with 20 inspections in two years. Also in the double digits were the *La Cucaracha* and the *Motel California* with 11 and 10 respectively. The cost of these additional inspections is notable but not extremely high. For the worst offender, the *Case Case* we estimate the additional cost to be about \$3,000. For the other two high cost properties the costs were \$1,650 and \$1,500 each. For all twelve of the properties, we estimate the additional cost to be about \$12,150. This is a significant sum but it pales in comparison to the cost of Police Patrol, Fire Suppression and Fire Emergency Medical Services costs.

CITIZEN SERVICES OFFICE

The enforcement of the City Code of Ordinances dealing with building maintenance is divided between two agencies based on the type of property. Regulations regarding the maintenance of one and two unit residential buildings are enforced by the Code Enforcement Division in the Office of Citizens Services. The Fire Prevention Unit of the Fire Department enforces regulations regarding the maintenance of multi-unit buildings and commercial establishments. The inspectors in these units are empowered to use wide array of sanctions in seeking to achieve compliance with property maintenance codes. Most of these tools are available to all inspectors, except the Certificate of Occupancy Revocation which applies only to multi-unit and commercial buildings.

Correction Notices

Correction notices are used to inform property owners they may be violating a provision of the property maintenance code and instructing them to correct the violation by a specified time. This is the most frequently used enforcement tool and is effective most of the time. Generally, property owners will make the required correction within the specified time and, upon confirmation, the inspector will close the matter. Correction notices are often written but may also be verbal. In either case, correction notices are subject to appeal to the City Council but, in practice, relatively few are appealed and even fewer appeals are sustained. The correction notice is used frequently because it is relatively easy, inexpensive and usually effective. It also has the virtue of being more like a reminder than an official sanction.

Interestingly, despite their popularity with inspectors as a response to code violations, correction notices were not often used with our group of chronic problem properties. Only four properties received five or more correction notices: *La Cucaracha* (7), *The Watering Hole* (5) and *Dog House* (6) and *Dirty Business* (5). Ten of our 32 properties received no correction notices at all during a two-year period. Since these properties are all notorious with neighbors and enforcement agents, it is most likely that inspectors are electing to bypass correction notices and immediately invoke more aggressive sanctions. Analysis of these more serious sanctions in subsequent sections will support this contention.

Case Study: Bad Boys

- Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1925.
- MV: \$69,300.
- City Taxes: \$251
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$7,288
- Problems: Noise, Disturbances, Out of Control Boys, Weapons, Intimidation.

“Bad Boys” is a cute bungalow style single family home. Two women own this home, one of whom has two teenage boys. One of the boys is her son and the other a nephew. They pay the taxes and the home, at least on the exterior, is in reasonably good shape. Correction orders have been issued for relatively minor violations involving paint, doors, windows, house numbers and garbage. The owners have responded to the orders promptly. A summary abatement order was issued for a junk vehicle, in addition to a garbage abatement, but both were taken care of before the City needed to take further action.

Because of misbehavior by the two teenage boys, the police have been called to this address an amazing 81 times during the two years studied. Occasionally they have responded to several calls within a few hours. The greatest majority of the calls have been about noise and disturbances. Initially, the responding officers simply advised the occupants and left. This changed, however, after a gun incident in the property’s front yard. From that point forward, most of the calls resulted in reports being written and, in a few cases, arrests being made. Police calls later involved — besides the noise and disturbances — weapons, vandalism, disorderly boys, hassling neighbors and

haranguing neighbors. There were also arrests made for auto theft and assault. The FORCE unit conducted, or rather attempted to conduct, several “knock and talks” at this address. Once they did have a conversation with one of the boys in the yard. On other occasions the occupants were uncooperative. There have also been a number of extraordinary incidents involving neighbors. Once one of the boys was involved hit and run in front of the house and on another occasion they discharged weapons in a neighbor’s backyard. The neighbors are afraid and intimidated by the family.

The mother was unwilling to cooperate with the police and very defensive of the boys. She and the boys, are said to be very streetwise and know how and when to exercise their rights to thwart City interventions aimed at cooperation. The boys are known to be gang members and the mother is seemingly supportive of this affiliation and is absent from the home much of the time.

The City even took the extraordinary step of having the City Attorney meet with the owners but this was futile. The City also attempted to apply its ordinance regarding excessive consumption of police services, but this was also ineffective. This failure led to revisions in the ordinance but this did not happen quickly enough to address this situation.

This case clearly illustrates the limitations of City interventions in the face of sophisticated and resistant property owners. To this day the City has never succeeded in entering the interior of the home and all of its other efforts have been largely ineffective. It seems the only real hope of resolving this situation under current law is to incarcerate these bad boys.

Abatements

Abatement orders are used to correct public nuisances. An abatement order directs the owner of a property to correct a nuisance situation and advises that failure to act promptly may result in the City taking corrective action and assessing the cost of such action to the property owner.

Abatements are a more aggressive action by inspectors because they not only advise of a problem in need of correction, as do good neighbor letters and correction notices, they also contain the threat of City action if the property owner fails to eliminate the nuisance. There are three types of abatements used by inspectors. Summary abatements are used when they expect the correction to cost less than \$3,000. Enforcement officials may undertake summary abatements upon proper notification and after an opportunity to correct is given to the property owner. Substantial abatements are used for corrections anticipated to cost more than \$3,000. Substantial abatements require prior approval by the City Council. Exceptions to notification and approval processes can be made in emergency situations, but emergency abatements are subject to appeal by the City Council.

As might be expected with chronic problem properties, abatements are more frequently used than the more benign correction notices. Twenty-four of our 32 properties have experienced at least one abatement during the study period and some have had many. *Errant Investor I* had twelve abatements within two years and *Empty Promise* and *Errant Investor II* had eight and seven, respectively. Several properties had five or six abatements. As a group, our 32 properties experienced 85 abatements in 24 months. This is an average of more than 3.5 abatements each month for our 32 properties. Another way of looking at this is to see this as an average of more than 2.6 abatements per property within two years or more than 1.3 abatements per year for each property.

While it appears abatements are the response of choice for City inspectors when dealing with chronic problem properties, it is useful to carefully examine the cases with very high numbers of summary abatements. *Errant Investor I* and *Errant Investor II* were both in the hands of a completely irresponsible owner. The owner was drug addicted, unresponsive and difficult to find. Likewise, *Empty Promise* was a vacant duplex owned by a crack addict and frequented by drug dealers and drug users. Clearly, inspectors concluded correction orders were a waste of time with such owners and elected to conduct an abatement whenever problems got out of hand.

Orders to Remove or Repair

The City is responsible for eliminating public nuisances. When the City determines a structure constitutes a public nuisance, it may order the structure to be repaired or removed within a specified time. If the owner fails to make the necessary repairs or otherwise remove the nuisance condition, the City may remove the structure through a substantial abatement process. Under this process, upon approval of the City Council and the Mayor, the City removes the nuisance and assesses the cost of this demolition to the effected property. This process is mostly used for vacant buildings in a serious state of disrepair. None of the properties in our case study have been ordered to be removed or repaired by the City through this process. The City typically invokes this authority about 30 or 40 times each year. The City actually razes about 10 to 15 such buildings each year. Since the cost of these substantial abatements are assessed to the property, the City often recovers the cost when the property is sold. However, when the property goes “tax forfeit” the City likely does not recover its costs.

Table 27. Citation Summary Table for Code Enforcement (CE), Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) Program and Animal Control (AC)

Code Name	Tag Disposition
Alligator Alley	C of O tag: ATSP, ²⁰ \$100
Dirty Dealing	CE tags in September 2000 for violation of minimum property standards (both exterior and interior-sanitation): warrant for failure to appear.
Dirty Business	CE tag in July 1999 for violation of minimum property standards (exterior): warrant for failure to appear, \$100 bail. CE tag in March 2000 for violation of minimum property standards (exterior): found guilty, \$400 fine.
Dog House	CE tag in November 1999 for violation of minimum property standards (garbage): warrant for failure to appear. CE tag in February 2000 for violation of minimum property standards (garage door): warrant for failure to appear. AC tags in July 2000 (running at large, no dog shots, dog fighting, no dog license): found guilty. \$400.
Empty Promise	1) CE tag in December 1999 for violation of minimum property standards: pled guilty. \$700 fine, with \$200 payable and \$500 suspended if there are no same or similar offenses. 2) CE tag in January 2000 for violation of minimum property standards and illegal parked abandoned vehicle: pled guilty. \$700 fine, with \$200 payable and \$500 suspended if there are no same or similar offenses.
Errant Investor 1	CE tag for violation of minimum property standards: negotiated agreement on this and other tags to pay minimal fine, serve 2 days in jail (of 20) if chemical evaluation sought and properties sold.
Gangster Boyfriend	AC tag for dog running at large and no licence or shots.
Home Alone	CE tag in June 2000 for violation of minimum property standards.
Nasty Four	C of O tag in June 1999 for nuisance conditions: dismissed and retagged new owner.
Old and Ugly	C of O tag in July 1999: warrant for failure to appear, \$100 bail. C of O tag in October 2000: warrant for failure to appear.
Over the Edge	C of O tag in December 2000 for faulty/missing smoke detectors: ATSP, ¹⁹ \$75.
Overwhelmed	CE tag in April 2000 for violation of minimum property standards: warrant for failure to appear and \$200 bail set. In October 2000 cleared warrant.
The Brothers Grim	CE tag in July 1999 for violation of minimum property standards: warrant for failure to appear and \$200 bail set. CE tag in May 2000 for violation of minimum property standards: warrant for failure to appear.
The Case Case	C of O tag in September 2000: pled guilty. \$100.
Through the Cracks	CE tag in January 1999 for violation of minimum property standards (exterior): warrant for failure to appear, \$50 bail.
Watering Hole	2 liquor law compliance check failures during study period: first resulting in \$500 fine and the second a \$1,000 fine.
Weird Neighbor	CE tag in September 1999 for nuisance conditions: 3 court appearances resulting in court order to complete work in 6 months. CE tag in September 2000 for nuisance conditions: warrant for failure to appear, \$500 bail set. CE tag in November 2000 for violation of minimum property standards (exterior structural conditions): warrant for failure to appear and \$200 bail set.

²⁰ ATSP is an agreement to suspend prosecution, where the City and responsible party agree there will be no prosecution of the violation for one year, if there are no same or similar offenses, there is compliance with the relevant code and the responsible party pays court costs.

Citations and Housing Court

Criminal citations or “tags” were not often used for our group of chronic problem properties. Only 38 tags were issued to these 32 properties over a two-year period. This is only slightly more than an average of one tag each over two years. They are even more infrequent when it is realized six were issued to *Weird Neighbor* and five to *Empty Promise*. Excepting the eleven tags for these two properties, only 27 tags were issued to the other 30 properties over two years.

The multiple tags to *Weird Neighbor* were the result of the owner-occupant’s recurring challenges to the inspector’s orders. Once he fought a City order to remove a vehicle and won. In other cases he resisted inspector orders to complete home repairs and clean his yard. It is clear that multiple tags were issued not because of the particularly severe nature of the violations, but rather because the owner continued to challenge the inspector’s determinations. The many tags for *Empty Promise* resulted from the owner’s absolute refusal to respond to inspector’s orders. Interestingly, even given the problems with this property, the judge, upon the first conviction, only fined the owner \$700 and suspended \$500 if there were no same or similar violations in the future. There were, of course, similar violations the following year for which the judge again sentenced the offending owner to \$700 with \$500 suspended. It seems the earlier suspended sentence was forgotten as the previously suspended \$500 was not ordered to be paid.

Because of the time and difficulty involved in prosecuting tags and the generally unsatisfactory results, from the inspectors perspective, tags are seldom used and housing court is generally avoided even with the serious chronic problem properties selected for this study. Unless prosecution can be speeded up and the sanctions selected by the judges become more severe, tags are unlikely to be a major Code Enforcement tool.

Condemnations

Both Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement inspectors have the authority to condemn a property as unfit for human habitation and order it vacated until needed repairs are made or essential services restored. The most common causes for condemnations are loss of electrical, gas, water or sewer service. Buildings can also be condemned based on gross unsanitary conditions or unsafe conditions caused by fire, high winds or other forces. When a building is condemned, occupants must vacate the property. It cannot be re-inhabited until inspected and approved by the appropriate City officials. Condemnations are also sometimes used as a sanction of last resort when owners refuse to correct serious threats to the inhabitants’ safety. Inspectors are loath to issue condemnations because it means occupants must vacate and often have no where else to live. Inspectors are very reluctant to make people homeless.

Nonetheless, eleven of our 32 properties were condemned at some point during the study period and three were condemned more than once. *Misplaced* was condemned three times and *Double Gross* and *Nasty Four* were each condemned twice. *Misplaced* is a commercial towing service which was fire damaged. Condemnation of this property did not displace any residents. The owner did, however, continue to try to use the property for business despite it having been determined by Fire Prevention to be unsafe. The repeated condemnations were required because the owner seemed to refuse to “get the message” he could not continue to do business at this location. As the names would suggest, *Double Gross* and *Nasty Four* are residential properties where the owner did not maintain the properties to a level that they were fit to live in.

Case Study: Danger Island

- 11 Unit Rental Built in 1960.
- MV: \$273,600; MV per Unit: \$24,873.
- City Taxes: \$993
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$23,289
- Problems: Inexperienced Owner, Code Violations, property isolation, high tenant criminality: drugs, violence.

“Danger Island” is an eleven-unit apartment built in 1961. This apartment building is in a remarkably isolated location. It is surrounded by a bridge, railroad tracks and open space to the extent that there are no immediate neighbors at all. The lack of neighbors probably accounts for the fact that neither the City Council Ward Office nor the District Council were aware the building was in their area of responsibility. Police and Fire Prevention are, however, very aware of the problems at this building.

The current owner purchased this building, along with about ten others, in 1999. He apparently had no prior experience in the residential property management business which seems to have contributed to the problems here. Most of the buildings he purchased were distressed when he bought them and remain so. While the owner has been generally cooperative with City officials, his properties are suffering from poor management. Almost half these properties have some level of tax delinquencies and most have problems with bad tenants.

This apartment building has experienced numerous interior and exterior code violations. Such problems as water damage, overcrowding, broken smoke detectors, holes in walls and heat/furnace problems have been cited by inspectors. Similarly, they have noted exterior violations for such things as garbage, walls, paint and retaining walls. The owner has; however, responded to all these problems when cited and has maintained a Certificate of Occupancy since acquiring the building. During the study period, the owner hired a caretaker for the property, but an inspector noted the odor of

marijuana emanating from his doorway.

The compelling problem at this property is that the tenants behave terribly. Drug dealing and violence are the order of the day. Police have been called to this address 213 times during the study period. They have confronted drug users, violent altercations and other criminal behavior at an astonishing level. They have dealt with narcotics, fights, assaults, vandalism, fraud, arson, auto theft, burglary, stalking and other offenses.* The FORCE Unit has raided the building twice yielding guns and drugs on both occasions. Tenants deal drugs, fight and engage in all sorts of criminal activity on an amazing scale. When evicted they are simply replaced with others who are similarly predisposed and the problems continue. In some cases, where drug dealers have been evicted, their girlfriends often remain behind and provide return shelter as soon as the heat is off. More than 50 of the police calls have been to general areas rather than specific units. Most of the drug dealing activity seems to be in the building’s common areas along with fights and other disturbances. Much of the violence, however, goes on within the individual units. Every unit, except one, had calls for domestic violence. Some units had as many as twenty to thirty police calls in only two years. The high was 33 calls with other units having 29 and 23 calls each. Mental health issues are also apparent in at least one unit with the police needing to transport a disturbed resident to mental health facilities.

Despite the very high level of police activity at this address, other City staff are largely oblivious to the problems at this address. Even City building inspectors were largely unaware of the behavioral problems that plague this building. They see the owner as a generally cooperative person who just does not know how to manage residential rental property. The police, however, see this as a hotbed of criminal activity. The lack of immediate neighbors seems to prevent this property from coming onto the radar screen for either the Councilmember or the District Council. It is obvious improved communication among City agencies is needed if the causes of these problems are ever to be resolved.

It is informative to note that although they issued orders of condemnation for eleven of our 32 properties, no one was ever actually forced to vacate. Every time, the placard was lifted before anyone actually had to move out. This is not always the case as there are instances where vacations do occur. Condemnation orders usually result in corrections being made, at least to the extent that occupants are not forced to evacuate the premise. Whether this is because owners make needed corrections or inspectors relent, when faced with actually making occupants homeless, it is difficult to know. It is the case, however, that condemnation orders do have a way of getting owners attention. The prospect of being forced out of their home or losing the income from tenants can be a very effective enforcement tool when nothing else seems to work. It is not, however, very effective with large apartment buildings as owners know that the City is loath to make large numbers of people evacuate.

Rental Registration

Rental Registration is a City program requiring properties with one or two rental units to register with the City. It does not, however, apply to homesteaded properties or three or more unit buildings included in the Certificate of Occupancy program. Registration requires basic ownership information and the payment of an annual registration fee. The ordinance provides for the denial, or revocation, of a rental registration certificate when owners are observed violating City rules and regulations regarding the management of their properties. The ordinance also gives City officials expanded access to inspect these properties when violations of City codes are found or suspected.

There have been several attempts to implement parts of this ordinance. These attempts have been rather half-hearted and generally ineffective. It is clear the Administration, during the study period, had little interest in enforcing the requirements of this ordinance or in using the powers granted to them thereunder. For example, the fact only three of the eight chronic problem properties in this study, that should be registered were actually registered, despite their notorious histories. Notably, there have been no appeals to the legislative hearing officer nor any criminal prosecutions under this ordinance. Presently the City has a Rental Registration Program in name only, and until the Administration decides to take this ordinance seriously, the powers granted to enforcement agents under this ordinance will remain largely unused and, therefore, ineffective.

Problem Properties 2000

“Problem Properties 2000” was an initiative launched in the year 2000 largely in response to a series of newspaper articles raising questions about the efficacy of City Code Enforcement activities. The idea behind this program was there were thought to be a few property owners who owned many problem properties and Code Enforcement officials should identify these owners and given them special attention. This initiative began by identifying some problem owners through a process Code Enforcement officials have been consistently unwilling to document or even describe. The general sense was they knew who to include and establishing explicit criteria might not always select the “right” property owners. It was also apparently feared that documenting the selection criteria might provide a basis for those selected for special attention to challenge their inclusion. Since the selection criteria were unknown and undocumented, there could be no basis for challenge. While there can be questions raised regarding the appropriateness of such an approach by a government agency, it worked to the extent that no one successfully challenged their inclusion. Code Enforcement officials consistently denied they were “targeting” selected owners although the fact they were seemed obvious.

The PP2000 approach was to call selected property owners in for a meeting with Code Enforcement officials. At these meetings they told the owners the City was “fed up” with their irresponsible behavior and intended to do something about it. It was believed these meetings were successful in convincing some problem owners to “clean up their act” or to “get out of the business” by selling their Saint Paul properties. In cases where these owners were unresponsive to City coercion, Code Enforcement activities were “stepped-up” for their properties. It is widely believed by the Code Enforcement officials involved in PP2000 that they were effective in dealing with many of these problem owners. No data was collected regarding PP2000, so assessing the effectiveness of this effort is impossible. No matter whether it was effective, the program just faded away. There was no formal termination of the program, it just stopped being discussed. Its proponents claimed it ended because they had successfully dealt with most of the serious offenders. Others suggest it was just another fad program that fell by the wayside when media attention moved to other areas of interest.

Table 28. Property Interventions

Intervention	Residential			Total
	1-2 Unit	3+ Unit	Commercial	
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	19	9	4	32
Code Enforcement Citations	11 (57.9%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (25.0%)	16 (50.0%)
Average Code Enf. Citations	1.6	0.7	0.5	1.2
Abatements (Summary & Vehicle)	17 (89.5%)	5 (55.6%)	2 (50.0%)	24 (75.0%)
Average Abatements	3.6	1.2	1.5	2.7
Correction Notices	13 (68.4%)	6 (66.7%)	3 (75.0%)	22 (68.8%)
Average Correction Notices	1.8	1.9	2.3	1.9
Condemnations	6 (31.6%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (25.0%)	11 (34.4%)
Average Condemnations	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.5
Certificate of Occupancy Revocations	N/A	4 (44.4%)	2 (50.0%)	6 (18.8%)
Average Enforcement Actions	10.5	10.8	6.5	10.1
Problem Properties Task Force	2 (10.5%)	5 (55.6%)	2 (50.0%)	9 (28.1%)
PP2000 Program	4 (21.1%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (18.8%)
Tenant Remedy Act	0 (0.0%)	3 (33.3%)	N/A	3 (9.4%)
Housing Court Outstanding Warrants	8 (42.1%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (28.1%)
In Rental Registration Program	3 (15.8%)	N/A	N/A	3 (9.4%)

Good Neighbor Notices

Two years ago the City began experimenting with a program where inspectors train citizens to identify certain exterior code violations such as tall weeds, snow removal, trash and abandoned vehicles. Following this training, citizens would conduct exterior inspections of neighborhood properties and send or deliver form letters to property owners who may not be meeting code requirements. The program began as a pilot program in the Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood and was deemed successful with about one-half of the “good neighbor” letters resulting in

corrections. Because of this perceived success, the program was expanded to three additional areas in 2001. It is unclear at this point if the program has continued to enjoy success. This program has recently been reviewed by Council Research. In any case, it is unlikely this program would be effective with chronic problem properties due to the serious and enduring exterior, interior and behavioral problems commonly found there.

Problem Properties Task Force

The Problem Properties Task Force (PPTF) is yet another attempt by the City to address chronic problem properties. The distinguishing characteristic of the PPTF is its overt focus on coordinating the enforcement activities of all City agencies engaged in dealing with problem properties. The basic premise of this effort is that City agencies meet formally and regularly to exchange information about problem properties. To this end, a formal PPTF was created and a high-level City official was designated as the leader of the task force. It is now lead by a senior Fire Prevention Inspector.

The task force continues to meet monthly and discuss specific properties to coordinate agency enforcement efforts. Again, no data has been collected or analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the PPTF. The general impression of the participants is that it is a good idea and has sometimes led to more effective enforcement. The extent to which this is true has not been documented.

Table 29. Average and Median Costs²¹

Cost Category	Commercial	Owner Occupied	Rental	Total
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	4	11	17	32
Police Cost Average	\$14,918	\$5,731	\$11,807	\$10,108
Police Cost Median	\$10,270	\$4,680	\$9,490	\$6,630
Emergency Medical Services/Fire Cost Average	\$8,112	\$540	\$6,183	\$4,484
Emergency Medical Services/Fire Cost Median	\$1,828	\$457	\$2,742	\$1,143
Code Enforcement Average	\$225	\$818	\$547	\$600
Code Enforcement Median	\$225	\$750	\$600	\$600
FORCE Arrests Costs Average	\$0	\$473	\$428	\$390
FORCE Buys and Surveillance Average	\$163	\$502	\$535	\$477
FORCE Knock and Talks Average	\$65	\$154	\$130	\$130
FORCE Warrants Average	\$0	\$473	\$1,071	\$731
Certificate of Occupancy Average	\$562	\$96	\$521	\$380
Animal Control Average	\$38	\$382	\$132	\$206
Licensing Average	\$1350	\$0	\$0	\$136
Zoning Average	\$75	\$191	\$0	\$75
Total Costs Average	\$25,244	\$9,360	\$21,354	\$17,717
Total Costs Median	\$13,973	\$5,580	\$17,046	\$12,841

²¹ Medians are provided only for Police, Fire and Code costs. In other categories, the medians are either zero or lack illustrative significance and, therefore, are not presented.

OTHER CITY ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Animal Control

Animal Control is the activity within the Licensing, Inspection and Environmental Protection (LIEP) responsible for the enforcement of City ordinances regarding animals. It also engages in wildlife protection activities by capturing and relocating wild animals that mistakenly venture into the City. Animal Control also handles animal licensing and is responsible for the handling of dangerous or abandoned animals. Animal Control is almost entirely complaint based. They respond to calls from citizens and other City agencies where animals are involved. While an Animal Control officer may observe and apprehend a stray or dangerous dog while on the street, the overwhelming majority of their work is in response to a call for service.

While animal problems, especially dog problems, reflect a general disregard for the peace and safety of their neighbors, animal problems are not the sole cause any of our chronic problem properties. The reason may be that Animal Control can and does directly intercede if problems persist. They issue citations for repeated failures to comply with City animal control ordinances and seize and impound dogs when warranted. There is a clear identifiable source for animal control problems and clear and direct interventions the City may use to immediately stop the nuisance. This clarity and focus make it relatively easy to effectively intervene when animal problems occur. It is much easier to stop a barking, or even dangerous, dog, than to prevent domestic abuse, drug dealing or prostitution.

Fourteen of our 32 chronic problem properties generated calls for animal control assistance during the two-year study period. Most of these calls involved dogs. An interesting exception was the alligator for which we named *Alligator Alley*. The greatest number of calls to a single property was to the *Dog House*. Not surprisingly, all of the Animal Control calls to the *Dog House* involved dogs. These included dogs running at large, dog bites, abandoned dogs, unlicensed dogs, stray dogs and dog fighting. These calls reflect two episodes involving two dogs and two dog owners. *Empty Promise* generated six calls regarding dogs to the Police Department and Animal Control. The neighbors stopped calling when Animal Control seized and impounded the dog.

The cost of respond to animal control calls at the chronic problem properties in this study does not represent a major expense for the City. At an estimated \$150 per call, the 44 calls created an estimated total cost of \$6,600. While this is surely a cost above that of most properties in the City, it does not constitute a major financial burden for the City. The *Dog House* was the single most expensive animal control property with nine calls for an estimated cost of \$1,350. Many of the chronic problem properties, however, involved no animal control services or costs.

Zoning

The City of Saint Paul, as almost all large cities, has zoning ordinances which define the types of land uses and activities permitted in each geographic area of the City. City zoning staff are charged with the mission of ensuring property owners comply with zoning ordinances. They do this by reviewing proposals for new uses and by responding to complaints regarding possible violations of the Zoning Code. Three of our chronic problems have been the subject of zoning staff inspections. *Weird Neighbor* was storing a commercial type vehicle on his residentially zoned property. Based on the presence of this vehicle, he was deemed to be in violation of the zoning code banning commercial activity in a residentially zoned neighborhood. In this case, the owner challenged this determination and was successful in achieving a court ruling determining that he

was not in violation as he did not actually use the vehicle in question for commercial purposes. During this dispute, zoning staff conducted 11 inspections of this property for an estimated cost of \$1,650.

Misplaced is a towing garage that burned. Subsequent to the fire and the failure of the owner to make prompt repairs, zoning staff determined this was a non-conforming use that could not continue under the zoning code. Nonetheless, the owner continued to try to operate his towing business at this location. The continued illegal use precipitated at least two visits by zoning staff for an estimated cost of \$300.

Dirty Business is a classic example of a zoning violation. This is a single family home in a residential neighborhood where the owner decided to operate a landscaping business in their driveway and backyard. Not surprisingly, neighbors complained and zoning staff were dispatched to remedy the situation. Despite directions from zoning inspectors, the homeowner persisted in trying to operate this business which lead to more complaints and more visits from zoning staff. In total, three zoning inspections were conducted in the two year period at a cost of \$300.

Licensing

Just as a newspaper pundit said “almost everything is illegal in Minnesota.” Almost everything that isn’t, requires a license. Two of the businesses requiring licenses are operating a bar or a towing business. In the case of *Misplaced*, discussed in the preceding section on zoning, the owner of this towing business persisted in trying to operating this business without a licence to do so. Not surprising, this brought complaints from neighbors that brought licensing inspectors. They made ten visits to this property over two years and despite, explanations, warnings, orders and citations, never really succeeded in convincing the recalcitrant owner he could not do business without a license. These ten visits are estimated to have cost the City \$1,500.

The two bars included in this study, *Fight Club* and *Watering Hole* both had serious license problems. *Fight Club* was ultimately closed because of license violations and the *Watering Hole* was sold under threat of being closed for license violations. As these two experiences suggest, revoking a bars license to operate can be a most effective way of dealing with a chronic problem property. The difficulty, however, is that it generally requires a series of serious violations for a long period of time to justify revoking a bar’s license to operate. City licensing staff responded to 11 complaints at the *Watering Hole* and eight complaints at the *Fight Club* before the problems were deemed to be sufficient cause to commence license revocation proceedings. These license inspections are estimated to have cost \$1,650 and \$1,200 respectively. As is apparent from the cases in this study, licensing revocation can be an effective tool in seeking to eliminate chronic problem properties but it is slow and only applies to those relatively few chronic problem properties required to have licenses.

SUMMARY

An overview of the extent and manner in which chronic problem properties use City services shows the Police Department bears the greatest burden. Within the two years of this study, the 32 chronic problem properties required 2,488 visits by Police Patrol, with an additional 121 interventions by the FORCE Unit. The Police Patrol services are estimated to have cost \$323,440 or \$161,720 annually. Adding to this estimate is the cost of FORCE Unit services equaling \$55,315 or \$27,657. This means these 32 property are costing the Police Department an estimated \$189,377 each year. That equates to \$5,918 spent per chronic problem property per year in police service alone.

The Fire Department expended an estimated \$143,498 responding to 138 fire suppression and 176 emergency medical services calls to these 32 properties over two years. This was an average of \$71,749 each year or \$2,242 per year per property. In addition, fire prevention responded to 81 calls at a cost of \$12,150 or \$6,075 annually. On average, this represents a cost of \$1,898 annually for each chronic problem property in the study.

Table 30. Chronic Problem Properties Total Costs by Category for the Study Period

Cost Category	Commercial	Owner Occupied	Rental	Total
<i>Properties in Group (N =)</i>	4	11	17	32
Police Costs	\$59,670	\$63,500	\$200,720	\$323,440
Emergency Medical Services/Fire Cost	\$32,447	\$5,941	\$105,110	\$143,498
FORCE Arrests Costs	\$0	\$5,200	\$7,280	\$12,480
FORCE Buys and Surveillance	\$650	\$5,525	\$9,100	\$15,275
FORCE Knock and Talks	\$260	\$1,690	\$2,210	\$4,160
FORCE Warrants	\$0	\$5,200	\$18,200	\$23,400
Code Enforcement Costs	\$900	\$9,000	\$9,300	\$19,200
Certificate of Occupancy Costs	\$1,200	\$1,050	\$8,850	\$12,150
Animal Control Costs	\$150	\$4,200	\$2,250	\$6,600
Licensing Costs	\$4,350	\$0	\$0	\$4,350
Zoning Costs	\$300	\$2,100	\$0	\$2,400
Total Costs	\$100,997	\$102,956	\$363,020	\$566,953

The Code Enforcement Unit of the Citizens Service Office responded to 128 calls about these properties for an estimated cost of \$19,200 or \$9,600 annually. The average for the 32 properties is estimated at an annual cost of \$300 per property. While this cost is notable, it pales in comparison to the costs borne by the Police and Fire Departments

The costs associated with providing animal control, zoning and licensing services for these 32 property are comparatively small. The total estimated two year cost of these services were \$6,600, \$2,400 and \$4,350 respectively. This amounts to about \$103 for animal control, \$50 for zoning

and \$68 for licensing per property per year. While these sums are undoubtedly higher than average for properties in the City, they are comparatively minor when compared to the almost \$6,000 the Police Department and the almost \$2,000 the Fire Department spends on each of these properties annually.

Curing chronic problem properties is an expensive business. Not curing chronic problem properties is more expensive. We know the 32 chronic problem properties we chose for this study have consumed, and in most cases continue to consume, an enormous amount of City resources. They generate thousands of visits each year from police officers, fire fighters, paramedics, fire inspectors, code inspectors, zoning inspectors and animal control officers. These services are expensive. The "cheapest" of these properties for the City received an annual average of \$1,289 in these City services during our study period. The most expensive received an annual average of \$34,534 during the same time period.. Based on our estimate there are between 220 and 284 chronic problem properties in Saint Paul and our finding the 32 properties in this study consumed in excess of \$250,000 worth of City services each year, we estimate the City spends approximately \$1.95 to \$2.52 million each year attempting to ameliorate chronic problem properties. This cost might be acceptable if these expensive interventions were effective but we know, for the most part, they are not. At best, they keep the situations at these properties from getting completely out of control. They do not, however, resolve the underlying problems nor relieve the pain these properties cause for surrounding neighborhood.

While the direct costs to the City of attempting to deal with chronic problem properties are impressive, the indirect costs of the continuation of these problem situations are surely higher. The social costs of the violence, drug dealing, domestic abuse, public disorder and neighborhood disruption must be many times the direct service costs. The costs of emergency room visits, lost jobs, missed schooling, sickness, work absences, out-migration and reduced property values can only be imagined. Other costs that can not be quantified are the loss of peace, comfort, and freedom caused by these chronic problem properties. We know from the cases studied here these chronic problem properties often cause people to live in fear— afraid to venture out of their apartment or into their own yard. This loss of public peace can not be quantified but we all understand this is unacceptable if we are to provide citizens with the quality of life they expect in Saint Paul.

CURING THE PROBLEMS

Curing the problems associated with these properties means moving beyond reacting to the individual symptom presenting itself, such as garbage, a broken window or disturbances. Rather, it has to do with finding out why problems remain unmitigated for so long and keep recurring even after they seem to have been handled. Part of finding these answers is to look at all of the problems, and therein may lie the answer. If there are several children, a lack of money, drug use and domestic violence, it is little wonder that replacing a window or picking up garbage crops up as a problem. In this chapter we will examine the role the various actors can play in resolving the ongoing recurring problems at these properties, and the tools they can use to assist them in this effort.

UNABLE AND UNWILLING

Earlier in this study we established that in order for a chronic problem property to develop, the key actors must be unable or unwilling to fix the problems at these properties. It is more likely that a problem will develop if risk factors are present which predispose the property towards chronic problem development. Clearly the key to curing lies in making the key actors able and willing to fix the problems at these properties, and minimizing the risk factors for problem development.

On the surface making someone, some group of people or some agency able and willing to engage and fix a problem or problems seems like a relatively straight-forward proposition. If they are unable, then they need the resources and where-with-all to deal with the problem. If they are unwilling, then rewards and punishments can be put into place to persuade them of the error of their ways. As simple as this seems, figuring out whether it is the actors' inability or their unwillingness that is preventing them from fixing the problems on the property is difficult. If that is figured out, the next step is to choose the correct tool(s) to enable or persuade them to take action.

A case-in-point comes from the stories of *Errant Investor*. Here was a property owner who, at one point, owned nearly thirty properties in a several block area that were not problem or chronic problem properties.²² However, as the owner fell into drug addiction, the problems at these properties were not resolved when they surfaced. Surprisingly, not all of his properties became problems, although many of them did. A review of calls for police and code enforcement services shows a distinct point in time when some of his properties began to slip. As the addiction deepened, he became much more disconnected from the neighborhood, and networks of people with whom he had interacted. He also began to sell off some of the properties to finance his drug usage. Clearly, this property owner was both unable and unwilling to deal with problems as they arose. In the end, it was a combination of incentives and punitive measures which brought these properties back into control.

²² Owners who own multiple properties are not necessarily problematic. But as this case demonstrates, if the owner "goes bad" the impact is broad, and in a small area such as this, deep.

ACTOR INTERVENTIONS

Each of the case studies presents a story of a chronic problem property. In these stories, presumably, lies some explanation for the choices people and organizations have made. It is evident from the 32 case studies that each suggests its own, idiosyncratic set of solutions. The cure for the chronic problems has to do with changing the motivations of the actors involved, and in some cases, providing them with the new or improved tools for dealing with chronic problem properties. Using our current tools, we seem to have a 63 percent likelihood these chronic problem properties will show up again, as was demonstrated in Table 8. Indeed, 63 percent of the case studies would have been defined as chronic problem properties in the five years preceding our study period.

It has generally been our contention that owners are ultimately responsible for the physical problems a property experiences, and occupants are generally responsible for behavior and crime problems. Government, of course, is charged with making and enforcing the laws that govern these actions. The following sections will address these groups and tools, with an eye toward suggesting possible improvements. Possible improvements relate to the role local government can play. However, it should be noted that all levels of government, neighborhood organizations, neighbors and individuals have options for improving the way they deal with chronic problem properties.

Government

The term government, as it has been used in this report, covers a broad array of functions and services. These include law and code enforcement agencies, the courts, elected officials and service providing agencies. Given the broad definition we are using, it is clear that the public sector has the potential to interact with chronic problem properties at many levels and at many different points in time. Therefore, there are many approaches and tools different parts of government have the opportunity to use. We will discuss these as existing tools and approaches which may be improved. In this discussion we will present ideas that seemed logical based on the case studies, but there are, no doubt, additional improvements which could be made. We will then discuss new tools and approaches which may be developed.

Improvement of Existing Tools and Approaches

Knowing About the Problems

The first, and perhaps the most important, thing government needs to do with respect to chronic problem properties is to become aware of them. If a complaint-based method of law or code enforcement is being used, then government relies primarily upon occupants and neighbors to alert it about problems. This also holds true for the periodic-systematic approach, in that problems occur between regularly scheduled inspections, and government needs to become aware of those as well. The health and vitality of the household and neighborhood likely play a role in how occupants and neighbors relate to government and its ability to help them address the problems in their areas. As discussed earlier, a neighborhood or individual may be fatigued from having dealt with similar problems for so long, or they may be afraid of retaliation. In the case of *Errant Investor II*, an eleven p.m. shooting on a front porch elicited only one call from a neighbor. There are likely many cases of domestic violence where the victims do not alert police. Also, there are many tenants who fear losing their housing if they complain about conditions. Additionally, there are some who have

Case Study: Double Gross

- Rental Duplex Built in 1903.
- MV: \$33,800; MV per Unit: \$16,900.
- City Taxes: \$123
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$6,534
- Problems: Incapacitated Slum Lord, Narcotics, Disturbances, Domestic.

“Double Gross” has a long and colorful history as a problem property. It is an older, extremely low-value duplex in an area with a large Hmong population. This property is located in a poorer neighborhood, but not a “bad” area except for this property and the house adjacent to it. Double Gross has been the scene of major problems for at least the past six years. The significant problems seem to have come in waves cresting in 1995, 1998, and in 2001. In the years preceding our study period, the FORCE unit raided the property on four different occasions. These raids were provoked because of drug dealing and pitbull (dog) fighting. Both the upstairs unit and the downstairs were condemned in 1998 because of gross unsanitary conditions, including excess animal waste in the upper unit—no doubt connected to the resident fighting pitbulls. More recently, the property was condemned because of a gas and electricity shut-off for nonpayment of utilities and meter tampering.

In 1999 and 2000, the police were called to this address 40 times. These calls involved narcotics, disturbances, disorderly boys, domestic assault,

vandalism, fraud and animals. Many were prompted by illegal business often transacted on the front porch. In 2001, police visited the duplex 60 times (a 94% increase over 2000), mostly for narcotics and domestic assault. Other police visits involved burglary, “other sex offenses,” the execution of search warrants, warrant arrests, violations of court orders, and “other violations.” Some of these reports may indicate that someone on parole or probation was either living there, or a frequent visitor.

The owner of this property is a notorious slum landlord who owns 16 other one- and two- unit buildings in older, poorer inner-ring neighborhoods in Saint Paul, including the aforementioned problem property adjacent to Double Gross. He is variously described as a drunk, stupid or just incompetent. He also appears to be exploitative of some of his tenants and is recalcitrant about completing order to repairs in a timely fashion. He claims not to understand why the City is picking on him and sometimes calls City staff for help in managing his properties, specifically looking for City staff to condemn units so that he is not bothered with an eviction process. Since the owner chooses not to manage his properties, he seems to think City staff should do it for him. Repeated efforts to educate him in property management have failed despite the best efforts of City staff and Saint Paul Association of Responsible Landlords (SPARL).

Despite his apparent limitations, he seems to have a gift for acquiring property and making money in the process. He is, for example, credited with buying a property in the morning and reselling it in the

had a bad experience with government and are hesitant to bring forward their concerns. For example, a particularly serious set of tenant concerns was called in to the City about *Through the Cracks*. In this case, there was mis-communication within the department and the complaints were not investigated. It is hard to imagine this tenant will turn to the City regarding similar concerns in the future. At a very basic level, government needs to invite the participation of the community by encouraging communication on chronic problems properties.

Citations, Prosecution and Housing Court

In the area of Code Enforcement, we found there was a distinct tendency of inspectors to turn to using the “tool” of abatement as a first or second resort in dealing with chronic problem properties, rather than the issuance of correction orders alone. This response by staff in the field is reflective of their experience working with given properties, people and situations. Issuance of abatement orders is, in their experience, more likely to rectify the problem situation quickly. No doubt, this is connected to the fact that once an abatement order is issued, owners have a given amount of time to clean up the problem situation before government moves in to clean it up for them— and assess the cost to their taxes.

Experience has taught inspectors (and in some cases police officers) that using a citation yields little, by way of results, in fixing problem situations. Table 27 provides information on citation activity for our 32 case studies during the 24-month study period. It shows a pattern of the court system not taking seriously the chronic problems at these properties and the adverse affects these problems have had on their neighborhoods. This may be reasonable, in the sense that the typical approach of government interventions is to look at the individual violation at hand, rather than the entire situation. Additionally, enforcement officers consider citations a tool of last resort, rather than one which is commonly used when approaching code violation situations. However, the courts tend to view citations as the beginning of their experience with a particular property or owner.

The court system is uniquely positioned to consider situations broadly, and in the context of their history. They must also be presented appropriate information about the entirety of enforcement, and possibly service-providing, agencies’ experience with a property. An excellent example of the court using its “bird’s eye view” to deal with a chronic problem property found in the case studies, *Errant Investor I and II*. Here the courts specifically took into account the role the drug use of the property owner played in the deterioration of his many property holdings. The court did this by staying imposition of some of the penalties, if the owner were to undergo a chemical evaluation. However, the fine levels and jail time ultimately imposed seem pale in comparison with the devastating effect his properties had on the neighborhood.

The situation in *Empty Promise* is typical of the frustration with the citation process. Here code inspectors had conducted eight summary abatements (clearing the exterior of the property from “everything imaginable” and some vehicles) and written five citations. The police had also been very active at this property, with 72 calls for service in a 15-month time period. They responded to many concerns, but almost all rooted to drug use and suspected drug dealing. In December of 1999, several Code Enforcement tags were disposed of with a \$700 fine— \$500 of which was suspended if there were no same or similar violations. In January of 2000 the other citations received an identical disposition— with apparent disregard for imposing the previously suspended fine. Additionally, it is not clear whether negotiated “agreements to suspend prosecution” if there are no same or similar offenses are revisited to determine if there have been no same or similar offenses.

Case Study: Dirty Business

- Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1912.
- MV: \$104,200.
- City Taxes: \$361
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$1,939
- Problems: Landscaping Materials, Trash, Dog.

“Dirty Business” is a nice home in a nice neighborhood. The current owners, a family with children, have homesteaded the property for more than 20 years. The City has been trying to address the problems in this property’s yard for years. During our study period, the property owner has had interactions with Code Enforcement, License Inspection and Environmental Protection [LIEP], Animal Control and the Police.

The basic problem is that the primary owner is trying to run a landscaping business out of her home. Consequently, there are recurring complaints from

neighbors about storing landscaping materials in the driveway and yard. In response to these complaints the City has ordered cleanups of garbage, trash, landscaping materials and wood. The City has, at one time or another, used virtually every one of its enforcement tools to address the exterior code and zoning violations. It has issued correction orders, conducted summary abatements, issued citations and sent notices of zoning code violations. Most recently, the owner was fined \$400 for exterior code violations. On several occasions Animal Control has also had to cite the owner for dog leash law violations and failure to cleanup dog feces. The owner finally bought a dog license, but violations continue on a regular basis. The property continues to have some sanitary problems and the City may again need to cleanup the property.

The neighbors have been sensitive with this woman. She suffers from depression, seems unable to work from time to time, and reports she has been in treatment. Neighbors have periodically tried to help and also asked a priest to intervene. She seems to have little outside support to help her run her business in accordance with property and zoning codes that apply to residential areas. The City’s interventions are

Finally, another additional frustrating aspect of using citations to deal with code violations is that in many cases defendants do not appear in court. This results in the issuance of a warrant for failure to appear. Four months following the conclusion of our study period, in April of 2000, six of the seventeen case studies which had received citations continued to have outstanding warrants for failure to appear.

In summary, these concerns speak to the initial preparation of citations, the context in which citations are presented to the court, the seriousness with which the court views these code violations and follow up on citations which have been brought forward—including pursuing warrants for failure to appear. Each aspect of this process should be reviewed for improvement to better deal with the problems presented by chronic problem properties. It may be the City should pursue “presumptive penalties” for violations of these codes (as are used for license violations), that the process and reasoning for using citations be changed, or that the current process used by Housing Court need to be evaluated. All of these ideas, and more from the actors involved, should be considered to improve the effectiveness of government’s use of citations in handling chronic problem properties.

Improvement Using New Tools and Approaches

Knowledge in the Field & Referrals

In most cases, if there has been no complaint on housing or building conditions, the first government staff to become aware of those and other problems are paramedics and police officers. In both cases, they have been summoned to the property to handle a particular crisis. However, in the process they often see other problems. These front line staff need to be aware of the dynamics of chronic problem properties, and the process for communicating information they come across needs to be simple and effective. For example, a police officer sent to a property to investigate a domestic violence situation who observes housing conditions that clearly violate codes, should be encouraged to pass this information on to inspection staff—without spending an inordinate amount of time filling out forms and dealing with bureaucracy. This communication may take the form of a simple “check-off” on the standard reports used. Additionally, photos could be taken if the situation permits.

Information Systems

A possibility that could be used on its own, or in conjunction with case management, is the “flagging” of chronic problem properties in the City’s information systems. This would be initiated at the department level using a pre-determined definition of chronic problem property. Code Enforcement may wish to flag, as chronic problem properties, all properties which have required five or more inspector visits in the past year. A similar system is used by the FORCE Unit in the Police Department, where suspected drug-dealing properties are flagged and when patrol officers are dispatched on calls for service, reports are mandatory. The same type of system could be used on a city-wide basis, and would provide all staff with better information to deal with the problems they are confronting at these properties.

Case Study: Overwhelmed

- Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1919.
- MV: \$68,900.
- City Taxes: \$234
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$2,790
- Problems: Garbage, Abusive Boyfriend, Disorderly Boys.

“Overwhelmed” is a nice 1920's Cape Cod style house in a pleasant neighborhood. A nonprofit developer recently rehabilitated this property. A woman owns it and lives there with her two older boys and a younger girl. She works full-time in a third shift job to support her family and battles a chronic illness. A boyfriend sometimes lives there when he is not either in prison or with another girlfriend. He is currently in prison.

This property has a long and colorful history as a problem property. Problems go back until at least 1994 involving both property maintenance and criminal behaviors. This property always comes up in neighborhood meetings as a problem.

The owner is a poor housekeeper, and while the City has not conducted an inspection of the interior of the home, it is reported by a neighborhood police officer to be a mess and the upstairs bathroom has been called a “disaster.” The exterior has received considerable City attention. The City has issued orders to clean up garbage, vehicle parts, a bathtub and weeds. In all, the City has conducted five summary abatements during the study period and issued one citation in April 2001.

The boyfriend and the two boys are sources of ongoing criminal activity requiring continuing police interventions. During our study period, the police responded to 36 calls at this address. These calls involved child abuse, child neglect, disturbances, domestic assault, theft, auto theft, vandalism, burglary and dangerous conditions. The boyfriend is trouble. He is known to be involved in auto theft and is a drug

user. When he is in residence, he assaults the mother and, perhaps, the children as well. Ironically, while he abuses the family he also seems to create some level of discipline as the yard is kept clean and the boys are more under control. In essence, when the boyfriend is there, the exterior is neat. However, on the interior there is violence and intimidation. When the boyfriend is not there, the exterior deteriorates, but the violence inside the home subsides and the boys seem to run wild. The boys often refuse to go to school and they are an unending source of disturbances and generally terrorize the neighborhood. The schools have been ineffective in dealing with this truancy. However, given that police calls dropped off during the school year, some neighborhood benefit from the school is obvious. By way of follow-up, a similar pattern of calls for police service continued through 2001.

The police have attempted to intervene in this situation and have organized meetings with the woman and the neighbors. These interventions have been largely ineffective because of distrust and frustration from both sides. Things may have improved somewhat after these interventions only to return, after a while, to prior problems.

The core of this problem property seems to be the mother who is simply overwhelmed. Because of her work schedule, occasionally incapacitating illness, out-of-control children and an abusive partner, she finds it difficult to cope. She is said by staff who have worked with her, to see herself as a victim and is ashamed of her situation, but seems powerless to do anything to help herself. She has financial problems and may also have alcohol problems of her own. She needs personal, financial and mental health counseling, plus personal and financial assistance. No one seems willing or able to effectively intervene. The scope of the family problems are so broad and deep that nothing short of a full-scale, long-term social service intervention has any hope of addressing these problems. No one seems willing to take on this challenge.

Cross-Departmental Case Management

Communication on issues concerning specific chronic problem properties across different agencies within local government tends to be spotty. Part of this is likely due to the fact that a chronic problem property for one agency may not be one for another. Currently, the main mechanism the City has for communicating on these properties is the Problem Properties Task Force. In order to solidify communication procedures, two ideas present themselves. First, a “case manager” system could be developed where there is one central person responsible for tracking problems on particular properties. This manager would be responsible for “flagging” the property for all staff who interact with it, as well as working with the owner and other involved parties on plans to resolve the problems. This person could also be responsible for gathering appropriate background information for prosecutors and the courts to be used in the pursuing citations.

Change in Focus

One particular feature of case management that deserves further discussion is how government approaches its work. The majority of situations enforcement and service providing agencies are faced with respond well to standard intervention tools, such as citations, abatements and arrests. However, as we have discussed, the case of chronic problem properties is different and they require a more “in-depth” approach that takes into account the many problems occurring at the property. This change in approach represents a fundamental change in focus from “dealing with” or “handling” the problems— to solving them. Whether this change should be made exclusively using a case management system, or across all staff groups, we cannot say.

Knock and Talks

Another activity which could be undertaken using a comprehensive “listing” of the City’s interactions with a chronic problem property is the equivalent of a “knock and talk.” Here City staff would meet with the relevant owners and occupants to discuss the magnitude of the problems the City is observing, the costs of responding to these problems, and possible ways to resolve some of the problems.

City-Initiated Interior Improvements Using TRAs

The City almost never conducts abatements to improve, and bring into code compliance, the interior of a property. The exception to this is that the City sometimes removes interior garbage build-up that has led to gross unsanitary conditions. Almost always, correction orders and abatement notices are geared toward the owner ensuring that conditions are in compliance with relevant codes. Several of the properties in this study had Tenant Remedy Actions (TRA) brought to fix interior code violations. State law provides that TRAs may be initiated by tenants, some community organizations (such as district councils) and the City itself. In Saint Paul, these actions are brought by tenants and community organizations, often with the assistance of Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS). However, the City has not pursued this type of action. Staff for the City of Minneapolis report success in using this tool, and it merits serious consideration by the City of Saint Paul as well.

Case Study: Career Criminals

- Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1894.
- MV: \$52,500.
- City Taxes: \$191
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$4,785
- Problems: Incompetent Owner, Uncontrolled Family Members, Drugs, Prostitution.

“Career Criminals” is an older, owner-occupied single-family dwelling on a corner of a troubled neighborhood. The owner is an old man who, of late, requires a wheelchair to get around. Living with him are two nephews and several women. Most of these women are prostitutes including the owner’s daughter whom one nephew reportedly pimps. During the study period, at least seven women who were arrested for prostitution-related offenses listed this property as their home address for police records. The nephews are career criminals with drug abuse problems. The nephews are involved in drugs, pimping and street crime. They are also believed to be involved with gangs. The owner claims to be unable to control what goes on in his house, but he may actually be facilitating what goes on there. His cooperation with the nephews creates a stable living situation, which is, as a police officer said “close to work.” In addition, police officers who have been inside the house say the old man is a “collector” who has turned the interior into a floor-to-ceiling maze. Since this is a single family home, City inspectors have been unable to conduct an inspection of the interior, which could lead to a correction order or a

condemnation.

The exterior has received the attention of City inspectors because of things in the yard. Two summary abatements have been conducted to remove propane tanks and appliances. A vehicle abatement was also done to remove an abandoned truck in the backyard.

The police had been called to this address an extraordinary 46 times during the study period, or an average of almost twice a month. These calls involved domestic assault, theft, vandalism, fraud, stolen property, auto theft, loitering, disorderly boys and warrant arrests. The FORCE unit had conducted surveillance and attempted buys of illegal drugs. Search warrants have also been served at this property resulting in the recovery of drugs and guns. Arrests were made for operating a disorderly house and possession of drug paraphernalia.

The role of the owner in these criminal activities is unclear. It is noteworthy that this property was not considered a chronic problem property before the nephews entered the scene, and the old man was more or less capable of owning and managing the house. It was only when the nephews entered the scene that his household management skills were put to the test and he failed. In any case, the neighbors are afraid of this property and the level of criminal activity in the area reportedly drops off significantly when the nephews are in jail or prison. However, on the whole, the City’s efforts with this property have been largely unsuccessful in altering the behavior of these career criminals or improving the feelings of safety and security among the neighbors.

Interior Inspection of One- and Two-Unit Rental Housing

The lack of an inspection system that allows predicable access to the interior on one- and two-unit rental dwellings continues to be a problem. Rental Registration, as has been discussed, has not facilitated inspector access to even some of the worst condition one- and two-unit rental housing in the City. This problem needs to be engaged. Policy discussions need to take place which address the need to expand City inspection powers in these cases, whether it be through a revised rental registration program, landlord licensing or a Certificate of Occupancy Program for one- and two-unit rental housing.

Government Role in Dealing with Abandonment

There were two cases among the case studies where the properties were, for all practical purposes, abandoned by their owners, but continued to be occupied. These were *Errant Investor II* and *Old and Ugly*. In both cases, tenants were not paying rent, and problem behaviors of these occupants went largely unchecked. There seems to be no “in-between” category for ownership that acknowledges this abandonment scenario. A method of government “conservatorship” of these properties should be explored, whereby necessary repairs are made, basic services are paid for, behavior and observance of standard lease provisions is monitored, and rent is collected.

Neighborhoods

Central to our definition of chronic problem property is the idea that the neighborhood is adversely affected by the property in question. Neighborhoods themselves are not in a position to ensure problems are addressed, as are property owners and government. However, neighborhoods are not without power in helping to cure the problems. Developing a strong sense of neighborhood cohesion and shared values/expectations plays an indirect, but overarching role in identifying and dealing with chronic problem properties. Relatedly, battling the fatigue of dealing with chronic problem properties is best shared as a neighborhood, rather than individual victimized households. City and neighborhood actions that can be taken to work towards the cure of chronic problem properties.

At another level, once a chronic problem property has “come into being” and its problems have been addressed by relevant agencies, there still remains a tear in the fabric of the neighborhood. This tear is exemplified by the boarded vacant former drug house which stands as a reminder of past troubles and a lack of reinvestment in the present. Clearly, housing rehabilitation and occasional demolition are a part of mending the fabric of the neighborhood. Beyond that, there are many cases too where the housing or business continues to be occupied. For example, in *Career Criminals*, the house is occupied and the young men are in and out of law enforcement custody. The cases of *Bad Boys* and *Overwhelmed* are similar. The experiences of these properties are that the neighborhood will continue to suffer and occasionally be traumatized. The concept of restorative justice²³ holds some promise for repairing the relationship of the neighbors to the property, its owners and occupants.

²³ Restorative Justice is a value-based approach to criminal justice with a balanced focus on the offender, victim and the community. Involves the creation of programs designed to serve the needs of victims by providing a holistic approach to healing the harm suffered, while offering opportunities for offenders to realize the harm they caused, apologize for the wrong, help repair the harm, and earn their way back into good standing in the community.

Case Study: Nasty Four

- 4 Unit Rental built in 1883.
- MV: \$84,000; MV per unit: \$21,000.
- City Taxes: \$305
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$4,437
- Problems: Exploitive Landlord, Low Level Criminal Activity, Exterior and Interior Code Violations.

“Nasty Four” is a four-unit apartment building that was recently “deconverted” from an eight to a four-unit building. This property is located in an historic preservation district on a block known by the neighborhood to be a “problem area.” It has been a problem property in its own right for at least the decade. Members of the same family have owned it. Notably, members of this family own many properties in this neighborhood and throughout the City.

Maintenance and sanitary conditions have been a continuing problem. There have been exterior violations involving siding, trim and fencing in need of repair, as well as uncollected garbage. On the interior, problems have been found with holes in the walls, mice and carpet damage. Unit one was condemned after a fire causing \$15,000 in damage in February 1999. Unit four was condemned after a fire in May 2000. In all, four correction orders have been issued for garbage, the broken fence and mice. Three citations have been issued, two of which were for the broken fence and one for failure to vacate a condemned unit. The later citation resulted in a \$50 fine. Inspection staff indicated they have tried both cooperation and getting tough, to little avail.

The police have been regular visitors to this address, responding to 47 calls during the two-year study period, and 45 in the one year following it. Residents of all 4 units have had at least some interactions with the police. Fifteen calls were to unit one involving vandalism, theft, landlord/neighbor situations and

domestic assault. The police also conducted a “knock and talk” at unit one during which they recovered drugs and drug paraphernalia. Unit two had the least activity with just three police calls involving auto theft and domestic assault. Unit three had 15 calls about assaults, theft landlord/neighbor and domestic assault. An occupant of unit three was also arrested for driving with drugs in the vehicle. Unit four experienced 10 police calls for such offenses as assault, theft, family/children, runaway and domestic assault. The general areas of the building produced ten police calls for fights, assaults and dangerous conditions. At one point, the owners asked the police to arrest trespassers—ostensibly to discourage unsavory characters from hanging about.

The core problem here is the landlords are “jerks.” They are very clever and wholly uncooperative with City efforts to protect the inhabitants and neighbors. They seem to have little regard for the neighbors and know how to evade the system. In one interview, it was said “they could write a book on how to exploit tenants and evade City interventions.” In an example of this behavior, the landlords hired a caretaker during the study period to help to keep this and some of their other properties well-maintained. While this has been the case, we also heard reports that the caretaker acts as “muscle” to see that rent is paid on time. They are also said to rent to “bottom of the barrel” tenants and take advantage of them, often by turning over tenants while arranging to keep their security deposits and last month’s rent deposits. This allows them to maximize income from an otherwise undesirable property. They, themselves, may be involved in drugs and alcohol but are said to be “too smart to get caught at it.” The situation was thought to have improved recently. The landlords said they were doing more screening of their tenants and turning away the worst prospects. The near doubling in the level of police calls to this property suggests these efforts were particularly ineffective. There was, at one point, speculation that a nearby college would acquire this property with expansion plans. At this point, however, problems

Ultimately, these relationships must be restored. Almost all offenders are released and will return to the same property or area. This is the current experience of Los Angeles neighborhoods as gang members are released from prison and re-enter their neighborhoods.²⁴ Restorative justice for neighborhoods could involve sentencing practices that work to restore and rebuild the damaged neighborhood, or facilitated neighborhood-based mediation. Whatever the approach, attempts to mend the neighborhood when the offenders remain in the midst of those who were harmed is important for the existence of neighborhood cohesion.

Owners

Owners are an essential component of curing chronic problem properties. Recall that the essential elements for the development of a chronic problem property are the owner and the government being unable and unwilling to solve the problems. There are a huge variety of problems the owners could be experiencing, and the solutions to these problems are also varied. If it is the case that the owner lacks the resources or ability to effectively address the problems at hand, options which empower owners and provide them with necessary resources are called for. If it is the case that the owner is unwilling to effectively address the problems, then options which provide incentives and penalties for noncompliance should come into play. Unfortunately, for chronic problem properties, owners are usually unwilling and, to some extent sometimes unable as well.

At the simplest level, is the option of bringing a new owner into play. In the *Case Case*, many believe the new owner was key to turning this complex around, and the initial reports are good. In other rental property case studies, such as *Cracking Up* and *Alligator Alley*, new owners have not brought about changes in the situations of these properties. Changes in ownership for owner-occupied properties also have the potential of changing the status of these properties from being chronic problems to good neighbors. In both cases though, it is important that the new owners are clearly aware of the history of the property and the community standards which were violated.

Direct provision of services may help some of the owners in our case studies with the problems they are experiencing. In the case of *Dirty Business*, assistance in securing an alternate site for the landscaping business would likely help. In the case of *Overwhelmed*, a broader range of services may be needed. What seems to be lacking in our service systems is the ability to provide these people with the services needed, with strings attached to ensure they are addressing the chronic problems. For example, if money is provided for removal of garbage, the rebuilding of stairs and a new roof, it seems reasonable to need assurances that the money will be spent on those items.

SOCIAL & PERSONAL PROBLEMS

Overall, one is struck by the profound impact of social and personal problems in the lives of the owners and occupants of chronic problem properties. Issues of poverty, violence, alcohol and drug abuse are riddled throughout all of the case studies. Not surprisingly, this research process did not provide us with profound insights as to the ultimate solution of these problems. However, we will summarize some of our findings on how these factors act to make owners and occupants less able and willing to deal with the problems which confront them.

²⁴ *L.A. Gangs Are Back*, *Time Magazine*, August 26, 2001.

Case Study: Fight Club

- Commercial bar.
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$11,500
- Problems: License Problems, Criminal Activity, Crafty Manager.

“Fight Club” was a downtown bar with a restaurant and entertainment license. It was located at street level in a large building used for residential, office, light manufacturing and retail. The surrounding buildings are primarily commercial but there are several large residential buildings in the immediate area. The residential neighbors were very fearful of this bar and its customers. In fact, several residential neighbors reported being threatened by employees and customers of the bar. This business had been a problem almost since it opened and was on the problem properties task force working list.

The Fire Department and Code Enforcement issued orders regarding maintenance for this business dealing with garbage, doors, sprinklers and blocked exits. The primary problems with this business regarded criminal activity and failure to pay applicable license fees.

This bar had been the site of serious criminal problems

involving shootings, assaults and gang activities. The police responded to 112 calls during our study period. This means the police were called to this business, on average, once each week. These police calls involved narcotics, disturbances, domestic assault, fights, theft, aggravated assault, vandalism, weapons, haranguing and hassling. Eighteen of these calls involved fights, in addition to four aggravated assaults, three other assaults, domestic assaults and disturbances. Because of this high level of criminal activity, the City required metal detectors and video cameras to deter weapons and other violence. These requirements were not always met—resulting in a series of adverse actions against the liquor license. This license was actually in the name of the manager’s mother as he, himself, was ineligible to apply because of his criminal background.

The manager of this bar, at best, turned a blind eye to criminal activity in the bar. At worse, he allowed and encouraged criminal activity. Certainly he catered to a bad clientele. He was also chronically late in paying his City license fees and, when he did pay them, it was always in cash. He was very sophisticated in working City license and police agencies, and seemed to know just how far he could go and yet remain out of the reach of City enforcement agencies. This ability has, however, broken down in view of a recent series

The presence of poverty, and its concentration, is a factor in many of the case studies. It is demonstrated by the high level of delinquent taxes, utility shut-offs and relatively low market values of these properties. In some cases, this poverty turns into an unlikely tool for removing, or temporarily removing, chronic problem properties from a neighborhood. For example, a utility shut-off will result in a condemnation, and orders to vacate the premises. In other cases, unpaid taxes will lead to the eventual forfeiture of the property to the state. Or the inability to keep up on payments in a contract for deed will lead to the occupants losing the property. However, these are not real solutions to the chronic problems of these properties. Utility bills are almost always paid again at some point. Tax forfeiture is a very long process, and leaves a neighborhood stuck with problems for years at a time— as is demonstrated by *The Brothers Grim* and *Old and Ugly*. In the case of properties sold on a contract for deed, if they end up being ceded back to the original owner, they are typically resold on a contract for deed under very similar circumstances. In all of these cases, poverty undoubtedly brings more problems than it solves for these properties.

Alcohol and drug abuse were strong influences on the owners and occupants in the case studies. Although we have no drug use/abuse statistics, the stories of the people involved at these properties are indicative of high levels of alcohol and drug abuse, as well as addiction. In *Down 'N Out*, it seemed the majority of people in the twenty-room building had these problems, with the building being characterized as the “first half of a half-way house,” meaning it was occupied by people prior to recovery from addiction. In the *Errant Investor* stories, we saw how the property owner has ultimately lost most of his property holdings and seriously damaged the neighborhood through mismanagement and neglect related to his drug addiction. In the *Brothers Grim*, the drug abuse of the two brothers was a primary contributor to them ultimately losing their family home and hurting the neighborhood. Similarly, the drug abuse of the man living in and attempting to buy *Empty Promise* made his occupancy of the property untenable. And certainly the many times police officers were required to transport people to detox are indicative of serious problems.

Drug dealing in chronic problem properties is often connected to the drug abuse of the occupants. There also seemed to be a number of case studies in which drug dealing was reported to be a problem, but where the occupants were not reported to be using drugs in a way that led to police intervention. The Police Department had founded calls concerning drug dealing at 59 percent of the case studies. These situations varied considerably. *Errant Investor I* involved drug dealing, both open air and within the premises, with the knowledge and complicity of the property owner. *Cracking Up* was occupied by one, and sometimes two, women who likely had serious drug problems, and were believed by some to be assisting local drug dealers by allowing them to use the property. *Danger Island* is a multi-unit apartment building where it seems there is considerable drug dealing activity in the shared, general spaces of the building. This also seems to be the story with both *Alligator Alley* and *Case Case*. The fear and despair introduced into these properties and neighborhoods related to drug dealing is immeasurable.

Violence, in particular domestic violence, turned out to be nearly a hallmark of chronic problem properties. As has been stated frequently in the report, 88 percent of the properties had founded police calls for service related to domestic violence. Police were also called to two-thirds of the properties studies to handle “other violence” situations, and to 38 percent of them for fights. The sense of chaos one gets from the physical disorder pales in comparison to the social disorder associated with drug dealing and violence. Damage clearly occurs within the household where violence is present. Damage also occurs for the neighbors of these properties. One need hardly imagine that hearing, and sometimes seeing, repeated episodes of domestic violence is just as, if not more, harmful than dealing with mounds of garbage or junk vehicles on the neighbor’s property.

Case Study: Case Case

- 12 Unit Rental in a 4 Building Complex
- MV: \$ 200,875; MV per Unit: \$ 16,740
- City Taxes: \$708
- Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$15,179
- Problems: Exterior Violations, Criminal Activity, Domestic Abuse, Unresponsive Owner.

“The Case Case” is a 12-unit apartment building and is one building in a four-building complex. It is neither the best nor the worse of the four buildings. This apartment complex is in a fairly nice neighborhood made up of primarily single-family homes near an elementary school on a block of generally good buildings. The owner of this building owns three of the four buildings in this complex and has an attorney manage the buildings. There is no on-site caretaker although the condition of the owner’s 36 units seems to justify such a service. This landlord owns other buildings in Saint Paul and manages them in what City staff generally considered to be a peculiar manner. He seems to reflexively resist City efforts to address problems in his buildings for reasons known only by him.

In recent years there have been some violations of City building maintenance codes. In the interior there have been problems with heat, locks, doors, carpeting and screens. Exterior violations have involved such things as paint, lack of ground cover and abandoned vehicles. The owner’s failure to respond to City correction notices has lead to the Certificate of Occupancy being revoked twice, once in 1999 and again in 2000. The building also experienced an arson fire. The reluctance of the owner to make prompt repairs from this fire damage has caused great frustration among some tenants. There is a general feeling of the building being overcrowded with little space within which to

live.

The behavioral problems in this building are considerable. The police have been called to this building 114 times during our study period. These calls have involved quite serious matters such as drug dealing, prostitution, burglary, fights, narcotics and the reported murder of a drug dealer in front of the building. Forty-three calls have been to the common areas of the building such as halls, entrances and the parking lot. Notably, all drug and narcotic-related calls have been to the general areas of the building. Three units account for another 44 calls with one unit responsible for 28 calls. The calls to individual units are largely for domestic assault along with other family and child-related matters. The FORCE Unit has also visited this building in 1997 and again in 1999. Blatant drug activities, along with physical intimidation, have kept many tenants in a state of anxiety regarding their personal safety. Some forty-six percent of the building’s units are responsible for generating zero to three calls for police service each. This crowded building is clearly occupied by some who do the crime and others who are intimidated by them. In response to the extraordinary demand for police services, the City sent two “excessive consumption of police services” letters to the owner. It is not apparent if these letters, or anything else the City has attempted, have resulted in any improvement in this unhappy situation. Indeed, police calls in 2001 were 25 percent greater than had been experienced in either year of the study period.

Six months following the completion of our study period, all four of the buildings in this complex were sold to a new owner who has installed a caretaker. It remains to be seen if this ownership and management change will result in safer, healthier living spaces for the tenants and a better neighborhood generally.

CONCLUSION

Almost everyone, at one point or another, has had experience with chronic problem properties. They are occasionally on the evening news, as was the case with the McGuckin family of Sandpoint, Idaho in the early summer of 2001. This family was living in a remote cabin with few resources and the father had died earlier in the spring from multiple sclerosis and starvation. After the mother was removed from the home for felony child neglect, the children, aged 8 to 16 holed themselves up in the cabin with the many family dogs—fearful of all outsiders, as their (probably mentally ill) mother had been. The property was poorly maintained, with a build-up of household garbage and dog feces inside.

Not all chronic problem properties receive such wide media coverage—in fact, the vast majority do not. However, the McGuckin family situation, of which most of us became aware, bore some of the hallmarks of the chronic problem properties we have studied. These include the loss of control of one's surroundings which is exemplified by the gross unsanitary conditions, an owner who is both unwilling and unable to deal with the problems, as well as the predisposing and complicating factors of poverty and poorly constructed housing.

Chronic problem properties are *chronic* because of the number and complexity of the problems concentrated in the property. These problems can be lumped into the broad categories of social and physical disorder which have an adverse affect on the surrounding area. These problems range from the domestic violence we saw all too often, to drug dealing to junk vehicles, appliances and mattresses. The over-riding themes are these are cases where people have loss control of themselves—with drugs, anger, violent acts and victimization by violence. They have also lost control of their surroundings—with poor or little maintenance of the household, doors and windows often being broken allowing intrusion, auto theft, theft and burglary predominating.

Chronic problem properties, in some form or another, seem almost a given as a part of the human condition. There will always be some level of deviance—those who do not share and will not abide by the expectations, values and laws of society at large. But in urban areas, the impact of these deviant actions is too broad and deep to allow them to go unchecked. It is incumbent upon society to minimize and eliminate the chronic problems of these properties whenever possible—not only to decrease the vast amount of resources the public spends handling these problems, but to improve the general health, safety and welfare of the city. The challenge lies with individuals, community organizations and government to make owners and government itself able and willing to engage, resolve and cure these problems. Preventing the creation of more chronic problem properties is the next challenge. If chronic problem properties never “come into being,” they will not harm the community. The rewards of engaging these challenges lie in the improved quality of living residents and visitors alike will enjoy.

Saint Paul is a typical city. While remarkable in many respects, it is no more predisposed to develop chronic problem properties than most cities. City of Saint Paul analysis of the 2000 Census Supplementary Survey indicates that Saint Paul is perhaps the “ultimate middle class city.” This is based on income levels, poverty rates, unemployment rates and housing affordability—both rental and owner-occupied. Saint Paul also ranks very high in retaining and attracting middle class. Yet Saint Paul has chronic problem properties, not to the extent of some cities, but certainly its fair share. The question that now faces the City is: with what we know now, can we meaningfully lower the number and severity of chronic problem properties in Saint Paul?

APPENDIX A: CHRONIC PROBLEM PROPERTY CASE STUDY REFERENCE LIST

Name	Property Information	City Services Information	Problems Experienced	Page #
Alligator Alley	30 -Unit Rental Built in 1967 MV: ¹ \$618,000 MV per unit: \$20,600	City Taxes: \$2,242 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$13,829	Uncooperative Landlord, Code Violations, Tenant Crime	page 78
Bad Boys	Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1925 MV: \$69,300	City Taxes: \$251 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$7,288	Noise, Disturbances, Out of Control Boys, Weapons, Intimidation	page 80
Brothers Grim	Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1924 MV: \$119,000	City Taxes: \$471 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$5,891	Drug-Addicted Brothers, Garbage, Sewer Line Break in Basement	page 18
Career Criminals	Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1894 MV: \$52,500	City Taxes: \$191 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$4,785	Incompetent Owner, Uncontrolled Family Members, Drugs, Prostitution	page 100
Case Case	12 Unit Rental in a 4 Building Complex MV: \$200,875 MV per Unit: \$16,740	City Taxes: \$708 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$15,179	Exterior Violations, Criminal Activity, Domestic Abuse, Unresponsive Owner	page 106
Cash Cow	69 Unit Rental Built in 1971 MV: \$1,260,000 MV per Unit: \$18,261	City Taxes: \$4,573 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$34,821	Incompetent Managers, Criminal Activity, Code Violations	page 22
Cracking-Up	Rental Duplex Built in 1893 MV: \$59,000 MV per Unit: \$29,500	City Taxes: \$214 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$13,294	Slumlords, Criminal Activity, Drug Dealing, Prostitution	page 26
Cultural Conflict	Rental Duplex Built in 1883 MV: \$42,100 MV per unit: \$21,050	City Taxes: \$249 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$7,709	Poor Management, Exterior Violations, Large Outdoor Parties, Cultural Differences	page 42
Danger Island	11 Unit Rental Built in 1960 MV: \$273,600 MV per Unit: \$24,873	City Taxes: \$993 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$23,289	Inexperienced Owner, Code Violations, Property Isolation, High Tenant Criminality: Drugs, Violence	page 84
Dirty Business	Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1912 MV: \$104,200	City Taxes: \$361 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$1,939	Landscaping Materials, Trash, Dog	page 96
Dirty Dealing	Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1887 MV: \$56,000	City Taxes: \$221 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$13,131	Gross Unsanitary Conditions, Occasionally Vacant, Criminal Nuisances, Racist Neighbors	page 58
Dog House	Owner Occupied Duplex Built in 1889 MV: \$46,600 MV per Unit: \$23,300	City Taxes: \$176 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$2,387	Dog Fighting, Garbage, Drugs, Prostitution	page 72
Double Trouble	Rental Duplex Built in 1885 MV: \$49,700 MV per Unit: \$24,850	City Taxes: \$298 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$8,523	Exploitive Landlord, Criminal Behavior of Unscreened Tenants, Exterior Code Violations	page 64
Double Gross	Rental Duplex Built in 1903 MV: \$33,800 MV per Unit: \$16,900	City Taxes: \$123 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$6,534	Incapacitated Slum Lord, Narcotics, Disturbances, Domestic	page 94
Down 'N Out	20 Unit Rental Built in 1867 MV: \$121,300 MV per Unit: \$6,065	City Taxes: \$440 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$11,017	Tenant Behavioral Problems, Drinking, Disorderly Boys, Intolerant Neighbors	page 44
Empty Promise	Owner Occupied Duplex Built 1889 MV: \$53,900 MV per Unit: \$26,950	City Taxes: \$319 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$8,062	Code Violations, Vacant Building, Drug Sales/Use, Squatting	page 56
Errant Investor I	Rental Duplex Built in 1893 MV: \$53,600 MV per Unit: \$26,800	City Taxes: \$219 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$2,985	Absent Drug-Addicted Landlord, Drug Dealing, Intimidation, Later a Vacant Property	page 28

¹ MV is the market value for the property used by Ramsey County.

Name	Property Information	City Services Information	Problems Experienced	Page #
Errant Investor II	Rental Duplex built in 1884 MV: \$39,100 MV per unit: \$19,550	City Taxes: \$163 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$1,695	Absent Drug-Addicted Landlord, Garbage, Vehicles, Occasional Criminal Activity	page 30
Fear Factor	Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1909 MV: \$53,100	City Taxes: \$193 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$1,289	Garbage, Drugs, Intimidation	page 50
Fight Club	Commercial bar	Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$11,500	License Problems, Criminal Activity, Crafty Manager	page 104
Gangster Boyfriend	Single Family Rental built in 1888 MV: \$42,300	City Taxes: \$150 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$2,845	Criminal Companion, Disorderly Boys, Drugs, Probable Child and Animal Neglect	page 32
Home Alone	Owner Occupied Duplex Built in 1906 MV: \$83,800 MV per Unit: \$41,900	City Taxes: \$454 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$1,709	Tall Weeds, Domestic Violence, Child Protection	page 40
La Cucaracha	24 Unit Rental built in 1971 MV: \$1,107,800 MV per unit: \$39,564	City Taxes: \$4,245 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$19,696	Cockroaches, Criminal Activity, Prostitution, Drugs	page 70
Misplaced	Towing Service (<i>inoperative</i>) MV: \$20,500	City Taxes: \$144 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$1,982	Exterior Mess, Vacant Building Resulting from Fire, Junk Vehicles	page 74
Motel California	Commercial Motel MV: \$303,400 MV per Room: \$2,408	City Taxes: \$3,028 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$34,534	Uncaring and Possibly Corrupt Management, Code Violations, Crime	page 20
Nasty Four	4 Unit Rental built in 1883 MV: \$84,000 MV per unit: \$21,000	City Taxes: \$305 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$4,437	Exploitive Landlord, Low Level Criminal Activity, Exterior and Interior Code Violations	page 102
Old and Ugly	4 Unit Rental Built in 1888 MV: \$54,000 MV per Unit: \$13,500	City Taxes: \$470 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$9,575	Absent Landlord, Drugs, Interior and Exterior Violations, TRA	page 54
Over the Edge	3 Unit Rental Built in 1891 MV: \$56,000 MV per Unit: \$18,667	City Taxes: \$305 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$4,437	Baby Death, Narcotics, Doors and Locks, Trash, Possible Racism	page 34
Overwhelmed	Owner Occupied Single Family Home Built in 1919 MV: \$68,900	City Taxes: \$234 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$2,790	Garbage, Abusive Boyfriend, Disorderly Boys	page 98
Through the Cracks	Rental Duplex built in 1889 MV: \$49,500 MV per unit: \$24,750	City Taxes: \$180 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$6,307	Revolving Bad Tenants, Tenant Intimidation of Neighbors, Garbage, City Dropped Ball	page 38
Watering Hole	Commercial Bar Built in 1949 MV: \$94,200	City Taxes: \$664 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$6,307	License Problems, Public Drinking, Assaults, Indifferent Owners	page 76
Weird Neighbor	Owner Occupied Single Family Built in 1920 MV: \$101,800	City Taxes: \$395 Cost for Annual Calls to City: \$2,210	Long Term Incomplete Exterior Project, Commercial Vehicle Storage.	page 52

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APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abatement – The process by which the City takes action to put an end to a nuisance condition.

Summary Abatement – The process by which the City intervenes to put an end to a nuisance condition where the cost of the City's intervention is less than \$3,000. (example, removing garbage from yard, removing an abandoned vehicle, boarding a broken window, etc.)

Substantial Abatement – The process by which the City intervenes to put an end to a nuisance condition where the cost of the City's intervention is more than \$3,000. (Example, removing a delapidate building, removing heavy machinery from a lot, etc.)

Broken Windows Theory – A theory, developed by James Q. Wilson and George Keiling in the early nineteen eighties, which holds that if physical and social disorders are allowed to go uncorrected in a neighborhood, others will be emboldened to create more disorders. Eventually, this environment will attract criminals, who thrive in conditions of public apathy and neglect.

Buy and Sells – For purposes of this study, the process of having a police informant attempt to buy or buy drugs or narcotics from a suspected drug dealer.

Calls for Service – These are the telephone calls which come in through the City's 911 line requesting police, fire or medical service at a particular location.

Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) – All non-residential buildings and non-owner occupied residential building with three or more living units are required to obtain a certificate issued by the Fire Marshall certifying the building is in compliance with applicable codes.

Certificate of Occupancy (C of O)Revocation – The Fire Marshall may revoke a certificate of occupancy if it is determined the building is not in compliance with applicable codes.

Chronic Problem Property – Chronic problem properties are properties with *serious* (founded and substantial), *repetitive* (at least 3 instances of problems in 18 months) and *enduring* (active as a problem property for at least 18 months) problems which *adversely affect* their neighbors and/or the community as a whole.

Code Violation – A behavior or condition prohibited by Code. (occupying a building lacking in proper smoke detectors, failure to provide heat in winter, maintaining unsanitary conditions, etc.)

Collective Efficacy – The level of mutual trust among neighbors combined with the willingness of a individuals to intervene on behalf of the common good; for instance to supervise children and maintain public order.

Community Expectations/Standards – A set of beliefs expressing a community's vision, derived from the historical and learned framework of shared assumptions, values, norms and local laws that a group of interacting individuals, in a common location agree to abide by as an expression of their tolerance for behaviors within their community.

Complaint-Based Enforcement – A method of ensuring property, housing, health and building codes are followed throughout the community by responding to specific complaints or concerns citizens or others informed inspection officials about. This is considered one of the three basic approaches to ensuring codes are observed in the community.

Condemnation – A determination by City officials a building is unfit for human habitation and ordering the building to be vacated.

Conflict Theory – One of the major theoretical approaches to sociology which traces its roots to the work of Karl Marx and his critique of capitalism. In general, conflict theory assumes that social life is shaped by groups and individuals who struggle or compete with one another over various resources and rewards, resulting in particular distributions of wealth, power and prestige.

Correction Notice – A notice issued to the property owner by a City inspector noting a violation of City Code and directing the violation be corrected.

Disorder, Physical – Physical conditions, such as broken windows, junk cars, and garbage houses, that are viewed as troublesome and potentially threatening by its residents and users of public spaces.

Disorder, Social – Social conditions or activities, such as prostitution, drug-dealing, and loitering, that are viewed as troublesome and potentially threatening by its residents and users of public spaces.

Disorderly Boys – This is a term used in the Police Department's call-management system which refers to rowdy and/or disorderly youth.

District Council – City of Saint Paul citizen participation process whereby the City is divided into 17 districts which set up advisory councils that plan and advise the City on physical, economic and social development of their area, as well as on Citywide issues. In addition, they identify neighborhood needs, initiate community programs, recruit volunteers and inform residents through community newspapers, newsletters, flyers and community events.

Domestic Violence – Acts of violence, sexual assaults and or child abuse directed against family members, relatives or roommates, by another family member, relative or roommate who lives in the same house or apartment.

Exterior Code Violations – These are violations of City and State building, housing, health and property maintenance codes which occur on the exterior of the building or in the yard/area surrounding the building. For purposes of this study, we have divided these violations into two categories:

- 1) **structural code violations**— broken or missing windows and screens, broken or missing locks on doors, paint or siding in bad condition, roof/fascia/soffits with holes or leaking, outbuildings in poor condition, building walls with holes and stairs which are broken or in bad condition; and
- 2) **garbage/yard violations**— garbage or trash build-up, junk vehicle, tall grass and weeds, junk furniture, mattresses and appliances.

FORCE Unit – The Focusing Our Resources on Community Empowerment (FORCE) Unit of the Police Department was established in 1992 with the mission of providing a comprehensive approach to drug-related problem properties. Its purpose is to work with the community to reduce the level of drugs, narcotics and disruptive behavior at the neighborhood level. The FORCE unit has staff dedicated to crime prevention and block club coordination, code enforcement and street-level drug interdiction.

Good Neighbor Program – A program administered by Code Enforcement which trains citizens to identify certain exterior code violations such as tall weeds, snow removal, trash and abandoned vehicles. Following the training, citizens conduct exterior inspections of neighborhood properties and send or deliver form letters to property owners who may not be meeting code requirements. The program began as a pilot

program in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood and was deemed successful. It has subsequently expanded to three additional areas in 2001.

Heavy Enforcement Activity for Thirty Days (HEAT) – A Saint Paul Police Department effort to concentrate law enforcement activity on a particular area in order to fight street level crimes, such as narcotics dealing, prostitution and traffic violations, which effect neighborhood quality of life.

Housing Court – A part of the Ramsey County District Court system which exclusively handles housing, health and building code related citations and complaints. It was formed with the intention of providing a venue for hearing housing code cases which was expert in understanding the impact of code violations.

Incivilities (see disorder) – Incivilities, also known as disorders, are social and physical conditions in a neighborhood that are viewed as troublesome and potentially threatening by its residents and users of public spaces.

Interior Code Violations – These are violations of City and State building, housing, health and property maintenance codes which occur *inside* the building or dwelling on a property. For purposes of this study, we have divided these violations into three categories:

- 1) **house systems violations**— heat/furnace, electricity, water shut-off or malfunction, gas shut-off or malfunction, refrigerator failure, water heater failure and stove/oven failure;
- 2) **structural code violations**— floor coverings, missing and broken doors, holes in walls, water damage and stairs which are broken or in bad condition; and
- 3) **health-related violations**— rodent or insect infestation, garbage build-up, overcrowding, missing or malfunctioning smoke detectors.

Intervention – Government action to address the practices and or habits of its citizens and businesses that are perceived as violating local codes, nuisance laws and or community standards.

Knock and Talk – For purposes of this study, the activity of police visiting people, mostly in their homes, where the police discuss the concerns of drug dealing and use with the people thought to be involved.

Market Value – The assessed value of a property calculated by the County that uses the current real estate activity in the surrounding area to determine the property's value. This value is the basis for determining property taxes for the property.

Minnesota Gang Strike Force – A state-wide law enforcement agency created to identify, investigate, arrest and prosecute gang members engaged in "criminal activity."

Nuisance Crime – These are sometimes also called "quality of life" crimes. For purposes of this study, we have labeled the following types of criminal activity as nuisance: disorderly boys, narcotics/drugs, disturbances, public drining, prostitution, loud music, harranguing of passers-by, dog fighting, and barking dog problems.

PP2000 – A Saint Paul Code Enforcement program which existed from January – December 2000 which sought to identify property owners who have had repeated complaints against their properties and assigned these owners to an inspector who case managed the owner's properties.

Periodic-Systematic Inspection – A the method where buildings and conditions are comprehensively reviewed on a regular basis.

Problem Properties Task Force – This is a group of City staff representing a wide range of City activities which meets on a monthly basis to discuss problem and chronic problem properties they are working to devise strategies to fix the problems.

Property Crime – For purposes of this study, we have labeled the following types of criminal activity as property crime: theft, vandalism, burglary, auto theft, dangerous conditions and arson.

Remove or Repair (Order to) – An order approved by the City Council determining a property constitutes a public nuisance and ordering the owner to remove or repair the nuisance condition with a specified number of days.

Restorative Justice – Value-based approach to criminal justice with a balanced focus on the offender, victim and the community. Involves the creation of programs designed to serve the needs of victims by providing a holistic approach to healing the harm suffered, while offering opportunities for offenders to realize the harm they caused, apologize for the wrong, help repair the harm, and earn their way back into good standing in the community.

Saint Paul Association of Responsible Landlords (SPARL) – An non-profit organization which educates landlords in effort to make them more successful and responsible members of the community.

Slum Lord – A slang term referring to an owner of rental property who behaves in an irresponsible and exploitive manner.

Social Cohesion – The degree to which participants in social systems feel committed to the system and the well-being of other participants.

Social Capital – Social capital refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS) – A law office for low income persons and senior citizens which provides free civil legal assistance to eligible persons in Saint Paul. SMRLS provides help in the following areas: housing, public benefits, family law, education and consumer problems.

Structural Functionalism – A theory that suggests a society functions best when individuals share the same norms and values because it promotes solidarity. Subsequently, because a society has established norms and values, that society will also have deviance because the rules of the society will not be agreed to or shared by everyone.

Surveillance – For purposes of this study, the process of police observing people suspected of being drug dealers, or locations where it is thought to occur.

Symbolic Interaction – A theory that attempts to explain the development of one's identity through one's interaction with others and how acts in response to what one perceives of what others think of oneself.

System Failure – When government, community and family interventions fail to keep a household or business from becoming a chronic problem property.

Tenant Remedy Action – Also known as a TRA, this is the means by which a tenant or group of tenants may take action through the court system to get needed repairs and maintenance completed on their

building or in their units. This is accomplished by the tenant(s) paying rent to a court-appointed administrator, rather than the landlord, who then oversees the correction of problem conditions.

Vacant Building, Registered – A legal term used by the City of Saint Paul to mean a building that is unoccupied and meets one or more of the following conditions: unsecured, or secured by other than normal means; or it is a dangerous structure; or is condemned; or has multiple housing or Building Code violations; or is condemned and illegally occupied; or is unoccupied for a period of time longer than one year during which time the Code Enforcement Officer has issued an order to correct nuisance conditions.

Violent Crime – For purposes of this study, we have labeled the following types of criminal activity as violent: domestic violence, assault, fights, aggravated assault, weapons, missing persons, stalking and robbery.

APPENDIX D: CALLS TO CITY, BY VIOLATION, BY CASE

Name	Code	C of O	Police	Fire	EMS	Animal	Licensing - Zoning
Alligator Alley	0	5	146	4	10	5	0
Bad Boys	4	0	81	0	0	0	0
Brothers Grim	6	0	46	0	3	1	0
Career Criminals	4	0	46	0	0	0	0
Case Case	7	20	114	5	9	1	0
Cash Cow	0	9	207	51	38	3	0
Cracking Up	5	0	164	2	4	1	0
Cultural Conflict	6	0	73	3	8	0	0
Danger Island	4	2	214	5	19	0	0
Dirty Business	7	0	9	1	0	5	3
Dirty Dealing	13	0	150	0	1	0	0
Dog House	2	0	10	0	2	9	0
Double Gross	2	0	40	0	4	1	0
Double Trouble	7	0	101	0	3	0	0
Down 'n Out	0	0	91	10	12	1	0
Empty Promise	3	7	72	1	3	6	0
Errant Investor I	6	0	29	0	0	0	0
Errant Investor II	7	0	18	0	0	0	0
Fear Factor	2	0	14	1	0	0	0
Fight Club	0	4	83	2	4	0	8
Gangster Boyfriend	3	0	24	0	0	2	0
Home Alone	5	0	17	0	1	0	0
La Cucaracha	0	11	185	13	8	0	0
Misplaced	3	1	5	1	1	0	12
Motel California	1	10	296	31	30	1	0
Nasty Four	4	4	47	2	0	0	0
Old and Ugly	3	6	55	5	12	1	0
Over the Edge	2	2	21	0	0	0	0
Overwhelmed	6	0	36	0	0	0	0
Through the Cracks	6	0	15	1	2	0	0
Watering Hole	2	0	75	0	2	0	11
Weird Neighbor	8	0	4	0	0	7	11

APPENDIX E: CALLS TO CITY, TOTALS AND AVERAGES, BY CASE

Name	Total-Study Period	Average Per Year	Average Per Month
Alligator Alley	170	85	7.1
Bad Boys	85	43	3.5
Brothers Grim	25	13	1.0
Career Criminals	56	28	2.3
Case Case	42	21	1.8
Cash Cow	50	25	2.1
Cracking-Up	156	78	6.5
Cultural Conflict	308	154	12.8
Danger Island	176	88	7.3
Dirty Business	244	122	10.2
Dirty Dealing	90	45	3.8
Dog House	25	13	1.0
Double Gross	164	82	6.8
Double Trouble	23	12	1.0
Down 'N Out	47	24	2.0
Empty Promise	111	56	4.7
Errant Investor I	92	46	3.8
Errant Investor II	114	57	4.8
Fear Factor	35	18	1.4
Fight Club	25	13	1.0
Gangster Boyfriend	17	9	0.7
Home Alone	101	51	4.2
La Cucaracha	29	15	1.2
Misplaced	23	12	1.0
Motel California	217	109	9.0
Nasty Four	23	12	1.0
Old and Ugly	369	185	15.4
Over the Edge	57	29	2.4
Overwhelmed	82	41	3.4
Through the Cracks	24	12	1.0
Watering Hole	90	45	3.8
Weird Neighbor	30	15	1.3

APPENDIX F: PROPERTY CODE INTERVENTION, BY CASE

Name	Correction Notices	Abatements	Citations	Housing Ct. Warrants	Condemnations
Alligator Alley	0	4	1	no	0
Bad Boys	3	2	0	no	0
Brothers Grim	0	0	3	yes	0
Career Criminals	0	3	0	no	0
Case Case	0	1	0	no	0
Cash Cow	3	0	2	no	0
Cracking-Up	3	6	0	no	0
Cultural Conflict	1	2	2	no	0
Danger Island	1	2	0	no	0
Dirty Business	5	2	2	yes	0
Dirty Dealing	3	6	2	no	1
Dog House	6	2	4	yes	1
Double Gross	0	1	0	yes	2
Double Trouble	4	1	2	no	1
Down 'N Out	0	0	0	no	0
Empty Promise	2	8	5	no	1
Errant Investor I	2	12	1	yes	1
Errant Investor II	1	7	0	yes	0
Fear Factor	0	3	0	no	0
Fight Club	0	0	0	no	0
Gangster Boyfriend	1	2	2	no	0
Home Alone	1	0	1	no	0
La Cucaracha	7	0	0	no	1
Misplaced	3	5	0	no	3
Motel California	1	1	0	no	0
Nasty Four	4	0	2	no	2
Old and Ugly	1	3	0	yes	1
Over the Edge	1	1	1	no	1
Overwhelmed	0	5	0	yes	0
Through the Cracks	0	5	0	yes	0
Watering Hole	5	0	2	no	0
Weird Neighbor	2	1	6	yes	0

APPENDIX F: PROPERTY CODE INTERVENTION, BY CASE (CONTINUED)

Name	C of O Revocation	Rental Registration	Problem Prop. Task Force	PP 2000
Alligator Alley	1	no	yes	no
Bad Boys	0	no	no	no
Brothers Grim	0	no	no	no
Career Criminals	0	no	no	no
Case Case	4	no	yes	yes
Cash Cow	1	no	yes	no
Cracking-Up	0	no	no	yes
Cultural Conflict	0	no	no	no
Danger Island	0	no	no	no
Dirty Business	0	no	no	no
Dirty Dealing	0	no	no	no
Dog House	0	no	no	no
Double Gross	0	no	no	yes
Double Trouble	0	yes	yes	no
Down 'N Out	0	no	no	no
Empty Promise	0	no	yes	no
Errant Investor I	0	yes	no	yes
Errant Investor II	0	no	no	yes
Fear Factor	0	no	no	no
Fight Club	0	no	yes	no
Gangster Boyfriend	0	no	no	no
Home Alone	0	yes	no	no
La Cucaracha	0	no	no	no
Misplaced	1	no	no	no
Motel California	0	no	yes	no
Nasty Four	0	no	yes	yes
Old and Ugly	4	no	yes	no
Over the Edge	0	no	no	no
Overwhelmed	0	no	no	no
Through the Cracks	0	no	no	no
Watering Hole	1	no	no	no
Weird Neighbor	0	no	no	no

APPENDIX G: FORCE INTERVENTIONS, BY CASE

Name	Knock n' Talks	Search Warrants	Buys n' Surveillance	FORCE Arrests
Alligator Alley	1	0	2	0
Bad Boys	2	1	1	3
Brothers Grim	4	0	4	3
Career Criminals	0	1	2	2
Cash Cow	2	0	0	0
Case Case	0	2	4	2
Cracking-Up	0	1	1	0
Cultural Conflict	0	0	0	0
Danger Island	1	4	0	3
Dirty Business	0	0	0	0
Dirty Dealing	2	1	7	1
Dog House	2	0	2	0
Double Gross	0	3	2	2
Double Trouble	4	0	3	0
Down 'N Out	0	0	0	0
Empty Promise	3	1	1	1
Errant Investor I	0	1	0	0
Errant Investor II	0	0	0	0
Fear Factor	0	0	0	0
Fight Club	0	0	0	0
Gangster Boyfriend	0	1	0	1
Home Alone	0	0	0	0
La Cucaracha	6	0	7	2
Misplaced	0	0	0	0
Motel California	2	0	2	0
Nasty Four	1	0	0	1
Old and Ugly	1	2	0	0
Over the Edge	1	0	7	2
Overwhelmed	0	0	0	0
Through the Cracks	0	0	2	1
Watering Hole	0	0	0	0
Weird Neighbor	0	0	0	0

APPENDIX H: COSTS FOR COMPLAINTS, CALLS FOR SERVICE AND EMS/FIRE RUNS, BY CASE

Name	Police Calls	FORCE Unit				Animal Control
		Arrests	Buys/Surveillance	Knock & Talk	Warrant	
Alligator Alley	\$18,980		\$650	\$130		\$750
Bad Boys	\$10,530	\$1,560	\$325	\$260	\$1,300	
Brothers Grim	\$5,980	\$1,560	\$1,300	\$520		\$150
Career Criminals	\$5,980	\$1,040	\$650		\$1,300	
Case Case	\$14,820	\$1,040	\$1,300		\$2,600	\$150
Cash Cow	\$26,910			\$260		\$450
Cracking-Up	\$21,320		\$325		\$1,300	\$150
Cultural Conflict	\$9,490					
Danger Island	\$27,820	\$1,560		\$130	\$5,200	
Dirty Business	\$1,170					\$750
Dirty Dealing	\$19,500	\$520	\$2,275	\$260	\$1,300	
Dog House	\$1,300		\$650	\$260		\$1,350
Double Gross	\$5,200	\$1,040	\$650		\$3,900	\$150
Double Trouble	\$13,130		\$975	\$520		
Down 'N Out	\$11,830					\$150
Empty Promise	\$9,360	\$520	\$325	\$390	\$1,300	\$900
Errant Investor I	\$3,770				\$1,300	
Errant Investor II	\$2,340					
Fear Factor	\$1,820					
Fight Club	\$10,790					
Gangster Boyfriend	\$3,120	\$520			\$1,300	\$300
Home Alone	\$2,210					
La Cucaracha	\$24,050	\$1,040	\$2,275	\$780		
Misplaced	\$650					
Motel California	\$38,480		\$650	\$260		\$150
Nasty Four	\$6,110	\$520		\$130		
Old and Ugly	\$7,150			\$130	\$2,600	\$150
Over the Edge	\$2,730	\$1,040	\$2,275	\$130		
Overwhelmed	\$4,680					
Through the Cracks	\$1,950	\$520	\$650			
Watering Hole	\$9,750					
Weird Neighbor	\$520					\$1,050

**APPENDIX H: COSTS FOR COMPLAINTS, CALLS FOR SERVICE AND
EMS/FIRE RUNS, BY CASE (CONTINUED)**

Name	Code Enforcement Complaints	Certificate of Occupancy	Licensing	Zoning	EMS & Fire	Total Cost
Alligator Alley		\$750			\$6,398	\$27,658
Bad Boys	\$600					\$14,575
Brothers Grim	\$900				\$1,371	\$11,781
Career Criminals	\$600					\$9,570
Case Case	\$1,050	\$3,000			\$6,398	\$30,358
Cash Cow		\$1,350			\$40,673	\$69,643
Cracking-Up	\$750				\$2,742	\$26,587
Cultural Conflict	\$900				\$5,027	\$15,417
Danger Island	\$600	\$300			\$10,968	\$46,578
Dirty Business	\$1,050			\$450	\$457	\$3,877
Dirty Dealing	\$1,950				\$457	\$26,262
Dog House	\$300				\$914	\$4,774
Double Gross	\$300				\$1,828	\$13,068
Double Trouble	\$1,050				\$1,371	\$17,046
Down 'N Out					\$10,054	\$22,034
Empty Promise	\$450	\$1,050			\$1,828	\$16,123
Errant Investor I	\$900					\$5,970
Errant Investor II	\$1,050					\$3,390
Fear Factor	\$300				\$457	\$2,577
Fight Club		\$600	\$1,200		\$2,742	\$15,332
Gangster Boyfriend	\$450					\$5,690
Home Alone	\$750				\$457	\$3,417
La Cucaracha		\$1,650			\$9,597	\$39,392
Misplaced	\$450	\$150	\$1,500	\$300	\$914	\$3,964
Motel California	\$150	\$1,500			\$27,877	\$69,067
Nasty Four	\$600	\$600			\$914	\$8,874
Old and Ugly	\$450	\$900			\$7,769	\$19,149
Over the Edge	\$300	\$300				\$6,775
Overwhelmed	\$900					\$5,580
Through the Cracks	\$900				\$1,371	\$5,391
Watering Hole	\$300		\$1,650		\$914	\$12,614
Weird Neighbor	\$1,200			\$1,650		\$4,420

APPENDIX I: 2000 TAX INFORMATION, BY CASE

Name	Total Local Taxes	County Taxes	Municipal Taxes
Alligator Alley	\$9,166	\$2,516	\$2,242
Bad Boys	\$1,038	\$282	\$251
Brothers Grim	\$1,924	\$528	\$471
Career Criminals	\$779	\$214	\$191
Case Case	\$2,921	\$794	\$708
Cash Cow	\$18,865	\$5,129	\$4,573
Cracking-Up	\$875	\$240	\$214
Cultural Conflict	\$1,019	\$280	\$249
Danger Island	\$4,058	\$1,114	\$993
Dirty Business	\$1,476	\$405	\$361
Dirty Dealing	\$903	\$248	\$221
Dog House	\$721	\$198	\$176
Double Gross	\$504	\$138	\$123
Double Trouble	\$1,218	\$334	\$298
Down 'N Out	\$1,799	\$494	\$440
Empty Promise	\$1,302	\$357	\$319
Errant Investor I	\$894	\$246	\$219
Errant Investor II	\$666	\$183	\$163
Fear Factor	\$788	\$216	\$193
Fight Club	*	*	*
Gangster Boyfriend	\$612	\$169	\$150
Home Alone	\$1,856	\$509	\$454
La Cucaracha	\$17,294	\$4,763	\$4,245
Misplaced	\$590	\$163	\$144
Motel California	\$12,376	\$3,397	\$3,028
Nasty Four	\$1,246	\$342	\$305
Old and Ugly	\$1,922	\$528	\$470
Over the Edge	\$1,384	\$380	\$340
Overwhelmed	\$952	\$262	\$234
Through the Cracks	\$741	\$202	\$180
Watering Hole	\$2,713	\$745	\$664
Weird Neighbor	\$1,615	\$443	\$395

APPENDIX J: AGE OF RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES, PRE- AND POST- 1939

APPENDIX K: ROBBERY INCIDENCES 2000 AND 1999